



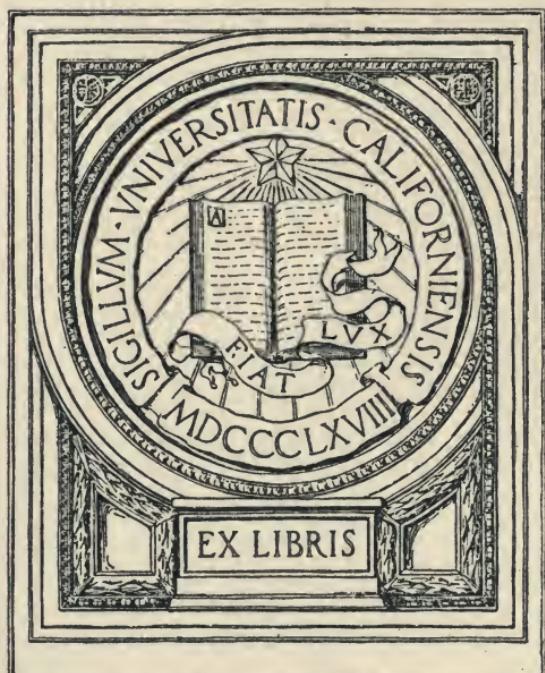
THE STORY OF DOROTHY JORDAN

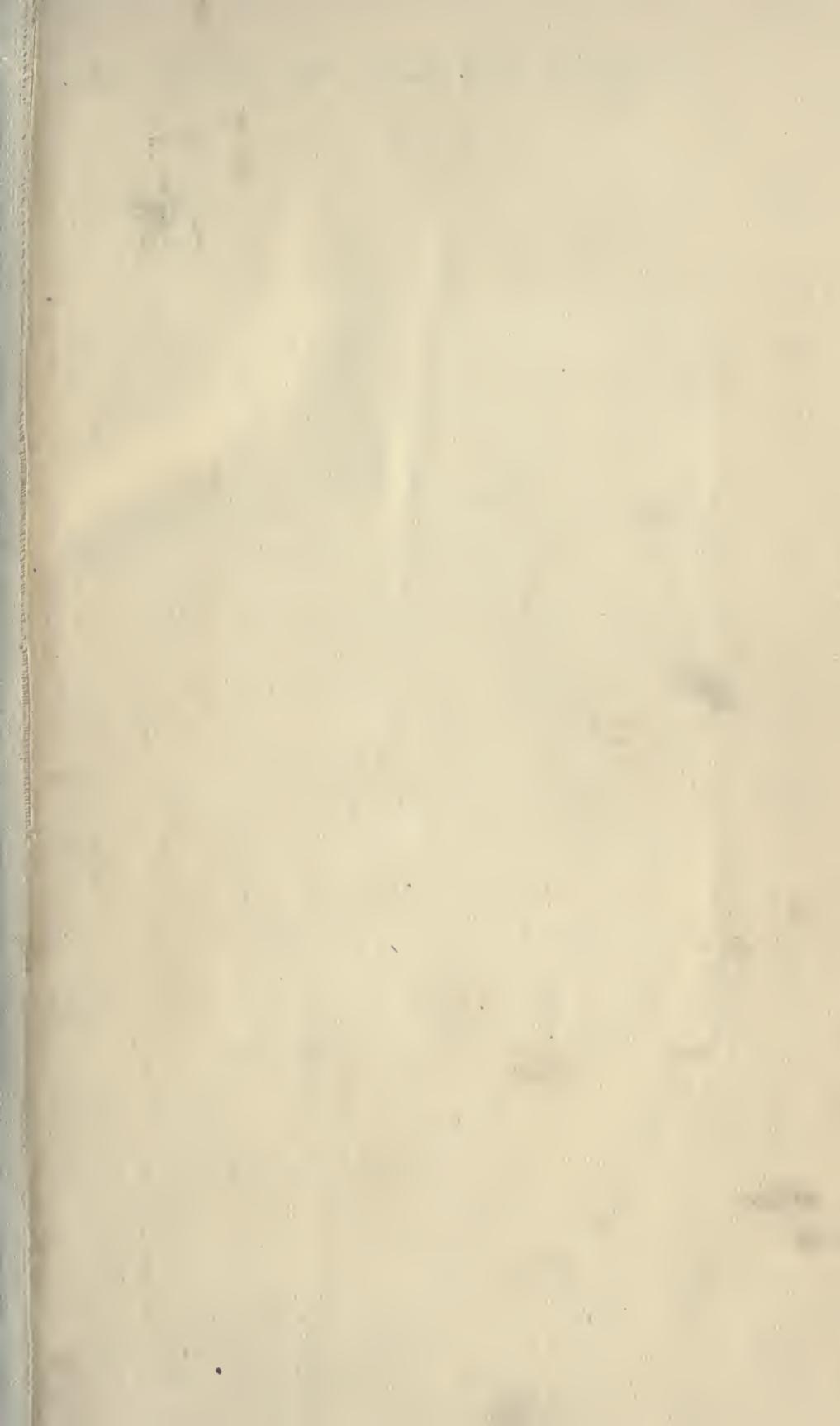


CLARE JERROLD

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THE STORY OF DOROTHY JORDAN

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE EARLY COURT OF
QUEEN VICTORIA

THE MARRIED LIFE OF
QUEEN VICTORIA

THE FAIR LADIES OF
HAMPTON COURT

THE BEAUX AND THE
DANDIES

ELIZABETH IN SEARCH OF
A HUSBAND

State of
California,

TO MARY
AMANDA JORDAN



Dorothy Jordan.

From a painting by John Hoppner R.A.
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THE STORY OF DOROTHY JORDAN

BY

CLARE JERROLD

AUTHOR OF
"THE EARLY COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA," ETC.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE
COLLECTIONS OF A. M. BROADLEY AND OTHERS*



LONDON
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1914

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PREFACE

IN Mrs. Jordan's life—"delightful Mrs. Jordan, whose voice did away the cares of the whole house"—there was no mystery: she was frank, gay and sensible, holding reserve only upon those things which she thought might discredit people whom she loved. Yet her biographers, Sir Jonah Barrington and James Boaden, managed to find mystery at every step of her career. The mystery about the date and place of her birth was simple enough: firstly, no one tried to solve it, and secondly, Mrs. Jordan had no wish for people to say that she was nearly four years older than the Duke of Clarence; has it not always been a woman's privilege to be vague about the year of her birth? The mystery about her father's and mother's station in life needed seeking in the right direction, though that which surrounded their asserted marriage was perhaps more difficult. The reason generally given for the adoption of the name of Jordan rests only on the word of that genial and self-complacent boaster, Tate Wilkinson, who gives several versions of his share in that matter. Whether the Duke took money from her or she took money from him has been the cause of another argument; her biographers hastily scouting the first idea with royal scorn. Her separation from the Duke, after twenty years of life together, and the cause of her exile, were deliberately turned into mystery by the two contemporary writers, one of whom

at least professed to know all the circumstances. James Boaden, author, dramatist, dramatic critic and editor of the *Oracle*, even tried to make a mystery of the last event of all, and adduced facts to prove that Mrs. Jordan was not dead.

Why should all this have been, seeing what an open-hearted, downright woman she was? The reason was not far to seek. These two biographies were written during the life of William IV; Barrington's before 1830, and Boaden's in 1830—and both these men worshipped at the shrine of royalty; they kissed the feet of the King, and, obedient creatures, strove hard to blot from their pages everything which could hurt his extremely delicate susceptibilities. The very strength of their protestations as to the virtue and honour of William partly gave their case away. In a recent biography of Mrs. Jordan—published when this book was nearing completion—there is also a tendency to save the Duke's character at the woman's expense, by throwing doubt upon statements adverse to him made by the author of a third early book upon the actress's life; an author who, undaunted save in declaring his name, voiced during the reign of William the beliefs of the multitude and the pronouncements of the day. This anonymous writer added much to the accounts given by Barrington concerning Mrs. Jordan's death and burial.

In the present volume will be found authorized statements, many of which have never before been published, as to Dorothy Jordan's parentage, both on her father's and mother's sides; as to her brothers, sisters and other relatives, showing her to have been the centre of a large family group; also *indisputable*

evidence of the date of her birth and baptismal name, hitherto frankly regarded as impossible of discovery. A new reason is here suggested, based upon family matters, for her adoption of the theatrical name of Jordan; here is her own evidence as to the Duke's constant acceptance of benefit from her work, and legal proof as to the way in which he repaid part of the sums she lent him. Here from contemporary writings is shown why she and the Duke parted, and why she went to France; and here is conclusive evidence of her death. Thus much new light is thrown, not only upon the life of Dorothy Jordan, but upon the character of that obstinate, erratic, stupid, good-natured and intensely selfish King known as William IV.

For the knowledge which I have been so fortunate as to obtain I am grateful to many friends. First and foremost to Mr. A. M. Broadley, who, possessing a large number of Mrs. Jordan's autograph letters and other documents, suggested the writing of this book, lent me all he had on the subject, and gave many of the illustrations. Mr. Broadley had already caused the registers of and around Waterford—the place usually assigned to her birth—to be searched, and as these gave no proof, pointed out to me the place where it might be—and was—found. It was he, also, who instituted inquiries at St. Cloud, the place of her death, and successfully discovered valuable evidence.

Another most kind and valued helper has been Mr. J. Franklin Fuller, F.S.A., of Dublin, a descendant of the Bland family, who has not only lent me priceless books and letters, but at much expense of time to himself has aided me in clearing up disputed points, secured for me portraits of Mrs. Jordan's

relatives and the right of quoting from family correspondence. To these two I owe more than I can repay.

I offer my grateful acknowledgments to the Earl of Munster for permission to reproduce the statue of Mrs. Jordan, executed by Chantrey; to Mr. Horace Bleackley, M.A., who kindly allowed me to consult in his library otherwise unobtainable books and magazines; to Mr. Richard Kelly and Mr. W. J. Lawrence, who together gave me the key which opened one door of knowledge; to General Thomas Bland Strange, R.A., for permission to use letters; to Mr. William Roberts for information concerning the portraits of Dorothy Jordan; and also to Mrs. White of Dublin, Major L. Hewson and Messrs. Duveen Brothers for permission to reproduce pictures.

CLARE JERROLD,

Hampton-on-Thames.

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THE STORY OF DOROTHY JORDAN

CHAPTER I

DOROTHY'S FAMILY

"What is known can seldom be immediately told, and when it might be told it is no longer known."—MALEY'S *Historical Recollections*.

"How happy the soldier who lives on his pay,
And spends half-a-crown out of sixpence a day."
From a song sung by Dorothy Jordan.

IF there is one person in our later history who might stand as the type of motherhood, it is Dorothy Bland, later known as Mrs. Jordan. Her great yet unblessed quality was protectiveness, and from her childhood she expended her sympathy and help upon those who were weak and appealing; in her girlhood she supported those who should have worked for her, in her womanhood she spent herself upon her children and upon the helpless man who, thinking he conferred honour, made extravagant demands upon her income, her strength and her love. She gave with both hands, gave honestly and fearlessly, and though in middle life she refused to go penniless when called upon to stand bereft of all before the world, yet she never took back the love she had given, never publicly uttered a word of reproach against the Duke who cast her entirely

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out of his life, while her daughter led the dance at the Regent's balls and her sons were accepted naturally in Court circles.

A hundred and twenty years ago social morality was much the same as it is now: a man might become the lover of many women, and only add a glorified halo to his reputation; but the woman who, in addition to having a lover was not in an assured social position, was condemned. An actress was, *ipso facto*, without the pale, and the curious thing was that it was not so much Society which judged as the intellectual portion of the community, that very portion which now is striving to equalize the standard of morality between man and woman, which is beginning to assert that what is sin in the one is sin in the other. When Dorothy Jordan lived, however, the gay and frivolous cared very little what she had done, and they felt quite able to judge between her and the Prince; it remained for the staid, reforming writers to expend their wrath and indignation over the woman who was the centre of a royal scandal. It was the virtuous British public which screamed itself hoarse in reprobation of her, and then went into the street to cheer the Duke of Clarence's carriage as it splashed mud over them from the gutter. After Dorothy's death that same public screamed at the Duke and wept for her. So far as the public went it implied no more than that it loved to have its feelings well moved, and that any determined hand could thoroughly stir up the puddle of popular emotion.

When Boaden, in 1830, brought out a life of Mrs. Jordan, some critic asked why such a person should be brought into notice at all. Cobbett, too, raked up an

old story and in extreme scorn spoke of her as "Mother Jordan," thus giving her the great title that really all the world loves. Dr. Townsend Young expressed his belief in her wickedness when, in the chapter upon her that he added to Sir Jonah Barrington's *Personal Sketches*, he did it, as he piously said, "not merely to enhance the value of this volume by gratifying the curiosity created by Mrs. Jordan's name, but also to assert the dignity and safety of principle, to point a moral, and to indicate the consoling maxim, 'Virtue alone is happiness below.'"

That Dorothy was not virtuous in the way he meant was not her fault; the desire of her life was to be legally married, and she fought hard for the fulfilment of that desire, but circumstances were too strong for her. She was born illegitimate, though her parents lived together for fifteen years; she was forced by threats to bear an illegitimate child, and later, sophistries and broken promises put her into the position of an unmarried wife. Then she gave up the struggle and frankly became a mistress, and from that time held the post of whipping-boy to the Duke of Clarence. Her most important biographers, in the frantic desire to lick the Duke's boots, regarded his grasping selfishness as but the manifestation of some amiable weakness on the woman's part. They were men, and they felt, even if unconsciously, the natural sex bias for the Duke. Up to the present day all who have written upon Dorothy Jordan have sung to the same note. They praise, they pity, they admire, but through every phase of their recitals, there rings a faint cynicism, a consciousness that the subject of their memoirs was, after all, only a light woman, and so not to be treated

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by an ordinary standard; they feel a little apologetic, too, that such a matter should engage their attention, and a little ashamed of the fascination that it holds for them. They cannot believe that this woman can have wielded a good influence over a Royal Duke, and so they leave alone this side of her character, and spend pages in trying to prove that only a few harmless episodes can be recorded against him, and that his worst fault was a want of tact.

So Dorothy Jordan is now remembered as a renowned actress, a person of low origin, one who knew not her grandfathers, who lived a mistress and who died mysteriously. While the general idea of William is that he possessed bluff, hearty ways, showed faithful affection to his wife Adelaide, and love for his children; that he was a man of hot temper, was sometimes rude to those who annoyed him, was even sometimes a little stupid, but that he was the best of the Georgian line of kings, indeed, as good a king as he knew how to be.

But would King William IV have been even so much as this had it not been for Dorothy Bland—if she had not rescued him from the companionship of his dissipated brothers, if she had not given him twenty years of her life, fostered his domestic instincts, kept him respectable when all other surroundings tempted him into irregularities, and often filled his empty purse with her hard-earned money?

By him she had ten healthy children, whose numerous descendants appear in *Debrett* and *The Landed Gentry*, and most of whom founded or strengthened our noble families. Among them now, at least, her name is honoured, even though her eldest son and

daughter were too uplifted by their father's rank to remember their mother. But Blands and Fitzclarences alike now prize the memory of the gallant, loyal, little woman to whom laughter was life, and who died despairingly when tears burned her cheeks and sorrow filled her heart.

Strangely enough the great purist, Queen Victoria herself, helped to pick Dorothy out of the contemptuous public indifference, when she allowed her granddaughter, our Princess Royal, the daughter of King Edward and a sister of our present King, to marry the Duke of Fife, a great-grandson of Dorothy through her daughter Elizabeth. Queen Victoria, before her moral sentiments became too rigid, was very tender-hearted, and to Dorothy's family she was always good, even to the extent of allowing from her own purse an annuity of £100 a year to Hester, the actress's eldest sister, until her death in 1848.

If mother-love was Dorothy's strongest quality, its cousin, loyalty, was almost as sturdy. From the first to the last she uttered no complaint against those who put their burdens on her shoulders, an insincere and weak father, a dependent mother, incapable brothers and sisters, selfish children, and the broken reed of a man upon whom she put her trust; she bore with them all, through good and ill, and, as far as those outside her home knew, their faults were for her writ in water.

"Had he left me to starve I would never have uttered a word to his disadvantage!" she once said of the Duke, and she meant it. To the end of her life she shielded him and all of them with a fine generosity, and they all took it as a matter of course, and left her to face loneliness and death unshielded herself.

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Surely an account of her life is worth writing, not so much by way of categorical description of her daily round and common task, as in revealment of her character and as an account of the romance which from first to last hovered round her. Yet it may be wondered whether the strength of romantic love ever claimed her personally, whether in her youth she had the chance of expending herself upon one whose touch could send a thrill through her veins, or whose glance could bring a glow to her face.

Daly, the man who in her girlhood regarded her simply as a feminine thing placed naturally within his grasp, she loathed with all her heart. Richard Ford! she must have liked him well to have accepted him, but there is no proof that she loved him with any intensity. When it came to the Duke of Clarence girlhood had departed, her life was arranged, and romance had fled on the delicate wings of innocence. Yet faithful love and loyalty remained, and these she nurtured and poured out upon him and her children. There were many storms in her existence, and there were exquisite times of happiness as there must always be for one who loves much; but the whole was completed by months of martyrdom caused by those she had cherished, by their stupidity, their self-love and the fatal fault of leaving to others to do the thing that should have been done by themselves.

* * * * *

It has not been easy to determine the parentage and early surroundings of Dorothy Jordan, for the earliest publications about her were not correct, yet correct enough to be generally disbelieved, as they showed her birth to be not altogether despicable. Probably

the first published account of her was in a number of the *Town and Country Magazine* in 1786, though it was very slight. James Boaden, who was a journalist and who knew her personally, gives in his *Life of Mrs. Jordan* a by no means true account of her parents, but he followed other publications which had never been contradicted, and he was partly right. *Jordan's Elixir of Life*, first published in 1788, provided the best summary that can be found. This little book was a selection of songs sung by her, issued at a time when her gaiety had infected the public, when crowds would gather at the stage door to watch her step into her carriage, and when her acting, her salary, and her private life formed the staple topic of conversation among theatre lovers.

The *Elixir* gave her a father, Captain Bland, a mother, Grace Philipps, a maternal grandfather, paternal relatives, four brothers and sisters, a birth-year which was quite wrong, and declared her to be an orphan. This was followed by an article in the anonymous *Secret History of the Green Room* (written by Joseph Haslewood, about 1791), in which these facts were amplified; and the *Bon Ton Magazine*, which had been in the habit of giving criticisms of her in its monthly parts, practically lifted the "Secret History" article for its March number of 1793. This *Bon Ton Magazine, or Microscope of Fashion and Folly*, was issued monthly for some years, and—regarded as interesting reading for Society—was most extraordinary in its vulgarity of moral tone and its erotic prints. Yet quite as indecent pictures were published by the caricaturists and sold to the populace as well as to those whose opportunities for licentious-

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ness were increased by wealth and position. If these things were produced because—as the newspaper people say of their productions now—they were what the public wanted, then the Royal Princes have been somewhat hardly treated in being regarded as the supreme exponents of the vices of their age. For a magazine of this sort could not have been published for a decade had it not been popular enough to pay for its production. Each month—*inter alia*—it contained an account of some vulgar amour among notable people, accompanied by a picture emphasizing their follies; and seemingly no protest was ever offered. This magazine, however, appears not to have been considered worthy of preservation, for there are very few copies now in existence, the only one I know of being in the possession of Mr. Horace Bleackley.

The next detailed account of Dorothy Bland was considerably later, when between the years 1826 and 1831 Sir Jonah Barrington published the story of her death as well as many reminiscences of her in his volumes of *Personal Sketches*. James Boaden's long and rambling *Life* of the actress—up to the present regarded as the standard biography—was written in 1830, and was quickly followed by that peculiar and most interesting publication *The Great Illegitimates*, a collection not only of personal reminiscences, but of much that had appeared in the daily papers, as well as the usual biographical items. This book, which is now extremely rare and not to be found either in the British Museum or the London Library, but of which I know of two copies, one in the library of Mr. Broadley and one in that of Mr. J. Franklin Fuller, was styled on its front page “*The Great Illegitimates*. The

public and private life of that celebrated actress, Miss Bland, otherwise Mrs. Ford or Mrs. Jordan, late mistress of H.R.H. Duke of Clarence, now King William IV, founder of the Fitzclarence family; delineating the vicissitudes attendant on her early life, the splendour of her noon-tide blaze as mistress of the Royal Duke, and her untimely dissolution at St. Cloud, near Paris—resulting from a broken heart.” This, accompanied by numerous remarks and anecdotes of illustrious and fashionable characters, was written by a “confidential friend of the departed.”

There have been various guesses as to who the confidential friend could have been, but it is possible that the outspoken book is the anonymous work of Robert Huish, for a great part of it is included as original matter in his *History of the Life and Reign of William IV*, published in 1837. It has been suggested that Boaden wrote it, but this is unthinkable, seeing that he is subjected to much scorn in its pages for his obsequiousness to royalty.

In all these biographies the date of Dorothy's birth is given as 1762, 1764, or 1766, the earliest date being the most frequent; in all but the *Elixir of Life* the place is given as Waterford, or near Waterford. There was, indeed, no question raised about it even in Dorothy Bland's lifetime, and in spite of the excitement caused by her death in 1816, and the fiercer excitement raised in 1824 when her creditors were advertised to receive five shillings in the pound, no writer upon her then or subsequently tried to verify the statements made.

Probably the first person who thought of doing this was Mr. A. M. Broadley, who, possessing many auto-

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graph letters and documents, had the registers in and around Waterford searched, but drew blank, and felt convinced that the account of Dorothy Bland's birth in London was correct. Mr. J. Franklin Fuller, of Dublin, seeking for Bland information, and also interested in the great comedian, discovered a mass of evidence about Dorothy's mother's family which sets all doubts at rest.

It is as well to sum up the story generally accepted about Mrs. Jordan's parentage and early life before relating the actual and authentic account.

Her mother was Grace Philipps, one of three sisters, daughters of a clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Philipps. Her father was a Captain Bland, who possessed a small fortune. Being stationed in Wales, he met and fell in love with Grace, inducing her to fly to Dublin with him, where they were safely married by a Catholic priest, both being under age. Captain Bland was the son of a prominent civilian in Dublin, a doctor-at-law, who was extremely angry when he found that his son had married an actress—(for Grace acted on the Dublin stage)—and still more angry when that son took to the stage himself. To show his displeasure he stopped all supplies, and reduced the young people to great difficulties. However, they had many years' happiness together, and were blessed with nine children; after which Dr. Bland caused the marriage to be annulled on the plea that it was contracted in nonage and without his consent. Captain Bland then left his wife and family and married "a nymph who adored him," and who also possessed much money; but he thereupon "endured agonies of conscience which no riches could deaden, and sank into an early grave, the victim

of his own heartlessness." As long as he lived Captain Bland sent some of his new wife's money to his family, but at his death they were left destitute, until at last, to quote the style of the sentimental thirties, "actuated by sentiments of common humanity, his relatives afforded some relief to the offspring, but totally abandoned the wretched mother to her fate."

The account in the *Elixir of Life* does not give Bland military rank and does not mention a second marriage, but states that after some years of happy life together Bland, having a long and expensive illness, was sent to the south of France, but returned home to Wales to die; Grace, for her part, being so occupied with the cares of her family that she devoted her time exclusively to it. This account was probably inspired by Dorothy, that she might not only shield her mother, but herself from the charge of illegitimacy. Joseph Knight, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says that the *Elixir* gives an untrustworthy account of her life; the story of the death of Bland was certainly not altogether true, but in other respects it was more trustworthy than all the other accounts put together. Mr. Knight also believed that Dorothy's father was merely a stage underling, and that he was a scene-shifter at Cork when Dorothy was acting there in 1778, a supposition based on a curious error of identity which will be explained in its place. Other accounts also ignore the statement in the *Elixir* that Francis Bland was well connected, being cousin to General James Johnston and to Sir Francis Lumm, a statement which was quite true.

On the father's death—the date is not given—Mrs. Bland was in Dublin, her two daughters being engaged

in a milliner's shop in Dame Street, and eventually Dolly went on the stage. The number of Dorothy's brothers and sisters are variously estimated as four, five and eight, the last being the favourite number, though only two definitely appear in the published histories and fragments about her life. In face of all these vague and conflicting statements it is a satisfaction to sift the false from the true, fill up gaps, give an account of the families both of father and mother, of the exact time and place of her birth, sweep away the mysteries which have been said to envelop her origin and later movements, the quarrel with the Duke and her death, even to supply at least another and perhaps more exact reason for the assumption of the name of Jordan.

The following is the true account of her origin—

Dorothy was of gentle birth on both sides, her mother being one of the three daughters of the Rev. — Philipps of Carmarthenshire—probably Richard—son of the Rev. Scuddamore Philipps of Kiffig, who entered Jesus College, Oxford, in 1702.

One of the Philipps sisters, who was named Blanch Scuddamore Philipps, married a man named Thomas Williams, of Trelethyn, a village in the west of Wales, two miles from St. David's. The Rev. [?Richard] Philipps may have had a living there or at St. Davids, for exact knowledge as to his domicile is wanting. But if he lived there with his daughters at the western extremity of Wales, whence on fine days the Wicklow hills can be dimly seen, it is curious to think that a straight line drawn thence to the west of Ireland would almost have passed over the house near the western extremity of that country where dwelt the

lad who was to bring the second daughter, Grace, both happiness and misery. In Derryquin Castle, near Sneem, on the estuary of the Kenmare River, the Atlantic waves washing the edges of its lawns, Francis Bland, a beautiful if not a clever boy, was growing up to manhood. These girls from the west of Wales and this boy from the west of Ireland were to meet in Dublin, a meeting which was on both sides brought about by the positions of the fathers of the young people.

A clergyman's life in a country place in the middle of the eighteenth century was not altogether enviable, and so the three daughters of the Rev. Mr. Philipps determined that they had a choice between work and poverty. Most girls would have accepted the lesson taught them that their work lay at home, and that they were destined to welcome both it and poverty. But by some strange influence these girls had become stage-struck, which was probably a sore grief to their father, for an actor then had no status higher than that of a strolling player and vagabond.

It seems as though the eldest girl tried a flight in London first, as a Miss Philipps was acting *Zara* in a play of that name in the season of 1755-6 at Covent Garden when Thomas Sheridan was there, and he, perhaps, engaged her to go to his theatre in Dublin when he re-opened it in the autumn of 1756. In any case, two or three—the number is variously given—of the Philipps sisters appeared there then, with the record of being determined to act together, and of being able to supplement each other's parts. Hitchcock, the historian of the Irish stage, described them as ladies who had received a finished and accom-

lished education. He asserts in one place that one married an actor named Usher, but this seems wrong, as all three can be accounted for. Blanch eventually married Williams, and lived at Trelethyn for the rest of her life. Another, Miss M. Philipps—I have adopted the family way of spelling the name—did not marry at all, but continued acting; the other, generally regarded as the second sister, Grace, became in course of time the mother of Dorothy Bland, Mrs. Jordan.

At this time a man of great importance in Dublin city was Judge Nathaniel Bland, for he was not only a man of wealth and estate, but one of great attainment as well as of great family, by which I do not simply mean rich and powerful, but rather that it was a family so prolific, so skilled and so energetic that it made itself felt through centuries both in England, Ireland and America. The name of Bland was taken from Bland's Gill, a hamlet in the parish of Sedbergh in the north of Yorkshire, where the Blands long lived, and from the beginning of the fourteenth century the family doings are recorded.

In 1303 a Bland was Mayor of London, and in the same century Patricius de Bland of Yorkshire furnished men to the king for expeditions against the Scots. In 1557 a John Bland brought to England the first intimation of the Spanish preparations for the Armada, and from Sedbergh came the learned and pious John Bland, M.A., Rector of Adisham in Kent, who with three others suffered martyrdom by burning at Canterbury in 1555. In 1560 one Adam Bland was appointed Sergeant Skinner to Queen Elizabeth; two hundred years later a Mary Bland was the grandmother of Lord Nelson, while Dean Bland was a



Pat. P. B. and

JUDGE BLAND

(THE ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING IS IN THE POSSESSION OF MAJOR L. HEWSON)

figure in elegant literature as well as provost of Eton in the early eighteenth century.

When Henry Viscount Sydney became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1692 he took with him as chaplain James Bland, a descendant of the old family stock, gave him the vicarage of Killarney and successively appointed him Archdeacon of Aghadoe and Dean of Ardfert. This Bland married Lucy, the daughter of Sir Francis Brewster, who held large forfeited estates in Kerry.

This James Bland begat two sons and three daughters, the eldest of whom was Francis, who became the Vicar of Killarney after his father; the second, Nathaniel, was born in 1702, and the daughters were Lucy, Dorothea and Hester, a triad of names which appears again and again in the Bland family; one of these was grandmother to Lord Napier, the conqueror of Scind.

But Nathaniel was the person of importance in this generation, his great capacities bringing him honours, even in his own country. In time he became a doctor-at-law, held the Metropolitan Seal at Dublin, sitting in that city as Judge in the Prerogative Court, and he purchased Derryquin Castle, a beautiful house, whether viewed from the sea or seen on the land side, with its ivy covered and turreted walls. He married twice: first with Diana Kemeys of Dublin, by whom he had two sons, John and James, the elder of whom he designed for the bar and the younger for the Church. His second wife was Elizabeth Heaton (wrongly named Lucy in Carlisle's genealogy) of Mount Heaton, and by her he had three sons and three daughters, the eldest son of this family being named

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Francis and the second Nathaniel, the daughters being again Lucy, Hester and Dorothy.

Though Nathaniel the elder had most generously fulfilled all the hopes which his parents had entertained concerning him, he was not to be so happy in his own children; yet at first he had great pleasure in his eldest son John, of whose early life I must give a slight sketch, because it has often been confused with that of his young half-brother Francis, as in *Actors of the Century*, by Frederick Whyte; because his doings had a distinct influence on Dorothy's father and because from time to time his name reappears in this story.

John Bland inherited all his father's quickness and cleverness, but this was accompanied by too great a versatility, too much good humour, and a love of life too widely spread. Destined for the bar he was admitted at Lincoln's Inn early in 1741, but in March of the same year threw up his profession and entered the army, his enthusiasm being such that, though nearly twenty years old, he became cornet in Bland's Regiment of Dragoons, commanded by his kinsman, General Humphry Bland. He carried the colours in the battle of Dettingen and fought at Fontenoy, being taken prisoner. On his escape he joined, under General Honeywood, in the suppression of the Scottish Rebellion of 1745 at Clifton Moor.

While in Scotland, or perhaps earlier, Bland became friendly with a young man known as West Diggles, supposed to be the illegitimate son of John West, Earl de la Warr, who was stationed there with his regiment. Diggles later left the army, probably because of an accumulation of debt, and in 1749 appeared in Sheri-

dan's company on the Dublin stage. Here the young men may have met again, in any case John Bland suddenly took to the stage, and West Digges was regarded as the tempter.

This was a terrific blow to Dr. Bland, one which not only injured his pride, but overturned all the hopes he had entertained of his brilliant but erratic son. Could it be possible that a brave soldier, a clever lawyer, the heir to Derryquin Castle and its lands, above all, the son of Dr. Nathaniel Bland, one of the most considerable men in Dublin, could stoop so low as to strut and prance upon the boards for the amusement of the public? Was it thinkable that such could become a strolling player, a mere vagabond in the eyes of the law?

Whatever arguments or entreaties were used, John stuck to his point, and actually had the temerity to appear on the stage as Polydore in *The Orphan* at Covent Garden on the 17th of October, 1751. He was not a success, though he certainly had no fair trial, for Carlisle¹ said that "he was hissed off by the merited indignation of his father's friends."

Then the deepest penalty of the family anger was inflicted: banishment from his father's house, loss of his allowance, total disinheritance, for Derryquin Castle was not entailed; and—greatest vengeance of all—his very name was erased from all further editions of Burke's *Landed Gentry*. Carlisle mentions and gives some particulars of him, but even he does not think it worth while to state whether he married or had children.

¹ *Collections for the History of the Ancient Family of Bland*, by Nicholas Carlisle.

Yet he did marry, though it is not known when or whom, but he called his wife Nancy, and she either was at the time of her marriage an actress or became one later. John Bland had several children, and through these sons and daughters he was progenitor of an army of actors, musicians and composers (such as William Howard Glover) and soldiers. Many of the latter—among them the Angelos—served with distinction in India; while the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan War and the South African War each claimed toll of his blood. In face of this what a childish act it was to erase his name from a printed book!

But Dr. Nathaniel Bland resolutely shut his son John out of his life, and bequeathed Derryquin Castle to his second son, James the clergyman: his resentment and anger being, one would think, sufficient to frighten his other sons from ever even remembering that there was any charm about the stage. Yet this was not so, for his third son Francis followed his step-brother John's example.

However, there was a difference in procedure. Francis did not hurry to disport himself before the public, he began by frequenting the theatre and watching pretty Grace Philipps every night.

The various biographers place the meeting between Grace and Francis in Wales, but the former left that country in 1756, and the love affair did not develop to any purpose until two years later, when Francis Bland was twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

By that date the two young people had fallen hopelessly in love, so hopelessly that Francis forgot his filial duty, forgot the fate of his brother, and forgot the havoc he might work in his family. Then it was

given out among the theatrical people that these two lovers were married, and Grace became known as Mrs. Francis, not as Mrs. Bland.

Francis Bland was a tall, good-looking man, pleasant and kindly in manner, but never regarded as clever. One biographer lamented that he was not endowed with mental as well as personal attractions, for though his appearance was "stately and comely," his mind was "corrupt and depraved." But Francis Bland's portrait¹ does not bear this out, and we must judge the writer to be prejudiced by his sympathy for Grace.

Much as I should like to prove that Francis and Grace were man and wife by law as well as by natural fact, it is beyond my powers. There is no legal proof anywhere of the marriage or of its annulment, and if there had been proof would Grace Bland not have made a fight for the recognition of her children when their father died?

It was in 1758 that the union took place, and in 1759, when two of the Philipps sisters seem to have been absent from Dublin, Grace's first child was born, receiving the name of Hester; who seemingly grew to resemble her father both in good looks and in an inability to make her own way in the world.

That Judge Bland found out the whole affair is evident, that he was very angry is also certain, but as Francis had not committed the final sin of making his marriage legal there was some palliation. Yet the rupture was bitter between father and son, and neither would give way. Francis is said to have lost his allowance, and in consequence to have taken to the

¹ Unfortunately the miniature could not satisfactorily be reproduced.

stage, and by so doing he put the seal on his father's anger. Then in October 1760 the Judge died at Currens, his will being proved on the 24th of that month.

It is impossible not to be sorry for this proud man who had won success for himself, and yet had found such bitter disappointment in his two sons; it may even be that the trouble with Francis accelerated his end, for he was not turned sixty when he died.

Through the spring and autumn of 1760 two of the Philipps sisters were acting at Smock Alley Theatre, but in October—as Hitchcock says—"the two Miss Philipps, with several of less note, returned to England."

What would have been the natural thing for Francis Bland to have done in these circumstances? He was banished from his mother's home and execrated by his family; he may have been without the means of earning his living, though this is a disputed point, and he had a wife and child to claim his attention. It is impossible to judge otherwise than that he accompanied Grace to England, and definitely threw in his lot with hers.

CHAPTER II

DOROTHY'S PARENTS

"Oh, what a simpleton am I
To make my bed at such a rate!
Now lay me down, vain fool, and cry,
The true love seeks another mate.

No tears, alack,
Will call him back,
No tender words his heart allure;

I could bite
My tongue, through spite,
Some plague bewitched me, that's for sure."

Sung by Dorothy Bland in Dublin.

IT is very possible that in London, that Mecca of the distressed, Francis knew that he should find his brother John, to whom he would now be doubly drawn by his similarity of fortune, and he might even have chosen his home that he might be near him. For John Bland was in London at this time, and a little later was living with West Digges in St. James's Sanctuary, which was probably the remnant of some street near the palace which in early times had served as a real sanctuary.

Francis and Grace seem to have settled down in St. Martin's parish, near the theatres, for there the second child was born, and there I found proofs of its birth. In the register of the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields is this crisp line—

Dec. 5, 1761. [Baptized] Dorothy Bland, [daughter] of Francis and Grace [Bland, born] Nov. 22.

Thus the doubt about the date of Mrs. Jordan's

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birth is settled. It was in 1761, a year earlier than all the accounts allow, and several years earlier than some give. Her name is also proved to have been neither Dorothea nor Dora, but Dorothy, though she used both the former names in signing letters.

There were two other entries in the same year's register, which might have been mere coincidences, and yet, on the other hand, might supply evidence could the links be traced. One ran as follows—

Nov. 12, 1761. [Baptized] John Bland [son] of John and Mary [Bland, born] Oct. 26.

Now John Bland, who probably did not marry until he took to the stage (that is, after 1749), had a son John, and this entry may indicate the birth of that son. But he called his wife Nancy, and as Nancy she was named in the notices of his death in 1808. However, Nancy may have been a pet name, and the two babies may have been cousins born within a month of each other, or they may have been the most distant and unknown relatives who never met.

The third entry belongs to a later period in the story.

Here in London the young people already had a circle of friends in John Bland and his family, West Digges, Grace's sister, and to these may be added Francis Lumm, the son of Francis Bland's aunt, who was always an affectionate friend to his cousin.

Except for the recurring births of children, there is little by which to trace the Blands during the next few years, and even concerning these it is impossible to tell in what order the children arrived. A girl named Lucy was born in 1764, and died at the age of

fourteen, being buried at Trelethyn. A boy named Nathaniel was born in 1767; other members who have been traced are Francis and George, and, in a shadowy way, another girl. Thus six or seven children born to Francis and Grace Bland are identified. Nathaniel was described in his college list as son of Francis Bland of St. Oswald's, Chester (City), and it is not unlikely that he was born there, as Chester was a usual halting-place between Dublin and London.

Whether Francis Bland was a captain in the army is difficult to determine. His portrait, taken from a miniature, looks more like that of a genial actor; but, as he is wearing a green uniform with yellow froggings, he may have been a soldier. The *Morning Chronicle* of October 27, 1788, reported him as having commanded a company on the Irish establishment "while he lived," implying that he remained in command until his death; but it is not unlikely that he went on half pay and adopted his wife's profession. The Blands seem not to have lived in Wales, as reported by the *Elixir of Life*, for in a private letter from a member of the family is the following statement—

"During a rebellion in Ireland Mrs. Bland brought her children to St. Davids and resided here for a while, her husband going to the south of France to his father. When he returned she joined him, leaving Lucy (her little daughter) with her sister (Mrs. Williams)." Francis's father had, however, long been dead, and the journey to France must have been in search of health. His illness would have been sufficient reason for a reconciliation with his mother, and he may have gone from France to his old home, where he may have met the rich Catherine Mahoney, who fell in love

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with him, for she lived at Killarney. That he came back restored to health seems probable, for his friendship with Miss Mahoney ended in their marriage on May 17, 1774, not at Killarney but at St. Botolph's Without, Aldgate. Thus, when Grace left St. Davids to rejoin her husband, as her relatives thought, she may have met him only to separate for ever, and to face a life of hardship and poverty, with some of her children on her hands. That the Welsh records entirely ignore some of her children, while other accounts ignore others, seems to prove that from the first Francis Bland made himself responsible for some, while some were left to their mother's care.

As for Francis, his health soon failed again, and if this failure was, as Boaden asserts, caused by remorse for his irrevocable treachery, it shows that something good still lived in his soul. Once again he started for France, but he only got as far as Dover when death seized him. His cousin Sir Francis Lumm, then Governor of Ross Castle, had his body taken home to Killarney for burial, and put up a slab to his memory in the church there, the inscription upon it being—

“To the memory of a once much loved and much lamented friend, Francis Bland, Esq., on whose kind heart, in his forty-third year, at Dover, on the second day of January, 1778, the curtain of this world's stage untimely dropped, this stone is placed by Sir F. L., Bt.”

Francis left by Catherine two children, a son Francis—his second of that name and both living—and a daughter Frances. Was it lack of heart or want of firmness that made him call Catherine's boy by the name of Grace's son?



DERRIQUIN CASTLE—SEA FRONT

REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF MR. J. F. FULLER

There is nothing but mere assertion to show that Grace and Francis were safely married by a Catholic priest, or that that marriage was annulled; and indeed Judge Bland could not have procured the annulment, as he died in 1760, when only one child, Hester, had been born, and before the birth of five or six other children. In addition to this, Francis was not under age when the marriage is said to have taken place.

After Francis Bland's death administration was granted to his wife Catherine, who swore to the place and date of their marriage, adding that "both were free from all marriages or matrimonial contracts whatsoever save to each other." Of course this proves nothing; Catherine may not have known of a former legal marriage, and, if she did and yet married him herself, she would have lied rather than tell the fact.

But the matter that seems to offer conclusive evidence is that if there had been a marriage Grace Bland would have fought for her children's position in the world. As a matter of fact she did make an effort, for a "pretended claim" was put in either by or for Nathaniel Bland. As the boy was then only eleven years old, the claim must have been made for him by "his next friend," as the legal phrase goes, perhaps his mother. This claim was disallowed, probably because the widow pleaded his illegitimacy, as she would have been sure to do.

Grace's sojourn in Wales may have synchronized with the period when Francis was married to Catherine Mahoney, but, if so, she and her relatives kept his treachery secret, for the succeeding generation did not know all the incidents. Then, on hearing of Francis's death, she may have returned to Dublin with some of

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her children, the two eldest girls and Nathaniel, and put in this claim on behalf of her son. The material consequences of her loss must have fallen upon her now, for the mental anguish of her husband's defection had long been deadened. While he lived he had provided for that large family which had been banished from his life, but his care of them could not extend beyond his death, for the money was Catherine's, and not his, and she turned her back utterly upon her husband's first family. However, other relatives, perhaps his mother or his half-brother James, were induced—it has been said—to afford some relief to the offspring, while totally abandoning "the wretched mother to her fate." Not that the "wretched mother" had any intention of being abandoned to any fate, for though she was not like the fox, who had a hundred ways of eluding the dogs of sport and death, she somewhat shared the quality of the cat who knew at least one safe way. She had acted on the stage with success, and she had a daughter Hester in the first bloom of womanhood, handsome and accomplished, able to dance, play, and speak French—who had, in fact, been more or less prepared for a theatrical career.

Grace was probably training this girl for the stage during those years of loneliness, and if she went back to Ireland early in 1778, she did not there remain helpless or idle. She made, or caused to be made, the claim on behalf of her son; she must have worried the Bland family by her demands, and she seems promptly to have put her two daughters to work in a milliner's shop in Dame Street. One theatrical chronicle says that they were working there in 1776, another puts it later, others ignore it altogether. Indeed, among all

the accounts of Dorothy's life, when as a girl of eighteen she first went on the stage, it is difficult to find the true one, so contradictory are they. The certain thing is that Grace was not in Wales in 1778, for it was then, on May 4, that her daughter Lucy, a girl of fourteen, died at Trelethyn, just four months after her father's death. Mrs. Williams, thus left without a child in her house, adopted Nathaniel as her son, sending to Ireland for him. Where some of Mrs. Bland's children were placed cannot be said, but she evidently then caused another son to come to share her lot, as she had a boy with her in 1782, who must have been George, for he had a good voice and was one of the choir boys in St. Patrick's Cathedral. In later years one of George's qualifications for the stage was his ability for taking part in opera.

There must have been something too repressive in Judge Bland's training of his sons, as his fourth boy Nathaniel (each generation included this name), next brother to Francis, also kicked over the traces, and lived away from home. At some period he made himself responsible for his dead brother's boy Francis, perhaps sending him to school from the first.

One of the most romantic accounts of Dorothy's introduction upon the stage is given by Joseph Dowling, who, more than fifty years later, published his reminiscences under the name of J. D. Herbert, giving them the title of *Irish Varieties for the Last Fifty Years*. There were many mistakes in this story, and probably the old man's memory played tricks, softening here, embroidering there, but some basis of truth there must have been.

Herbert says that, on returning from a bathe one fine

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summer's day in 1780, he was accosted on the Pigeon House Wall by a lad of about fourteen, who carried a handkerchief bundle, and who told him that he had just landed from Wales with his mother and two sisters, they being strangers to Dublin; he then drew Herbert towards the ladies, whom he found handsome and interesting, and who told him that they wanted comfortable but not expensive lodgings. The upshot was that they walked into Dublin together, and Herbert found them lodgings in South Great George Street, three doors away from where he himself lived, making good terms for them.

Grace Bland told the boy that her name was Francis, that she had been an actress, but had married a captain in the army who was on half-pay, and that her husband had died in Wales, where they had lived for economy's sake; and that now, having cut herself adrift from the stage, she could not support herself and her children on the allowance made to a captain's widow, and so was obliged once more to turn to acting.

The family of four settled down in South Great George Street, and Mrs. Francis being furnished with a letter of introduction to Ryder, the manager of Crow Street Theatre, waited to hear from him. The name of "Grace Philipps" alone would have been sufficient to cause Ryder to give her an interview, for they had acted together twenty years earlier, but that was probably her way of explaining the matter. He came, saw Hester, the elder girl, found her able to play, sing and do other theatre tricks, and engaged her, hoping that he had found a treasure. Then he billed her well and waited for the fateful night to arrive. The house was filled with a cheerful audience ready to

see and encourage a new and pretty actress, but to every one's horror, most of all to her own, poor Miss Francis was afflicted with such an acute attack of stage fright that she could not utter a word. No happy flash of memory or confidence came to her assistance, and she had to be led off the stage by the chagrined manager, while some one else took her place. Young Herbert, then only a boy, was present next morning when Ryder went to see Mrs. Bland, and, finding her crying, told her that she should have a part at the salary he had offered her daughter, and that if she would for a time go into the country towns to get once more accustomed to the boards, he would try the second girl Dorothy in place of her sister.

"Oh!" replied the mother, "Dolly would be no use at acting, she is but a tomboy; it was only just before you came in that she was jumping downstairs, and boasting that she could jump one step more than either of the boys dared attempt. Then, too, she is so untidy—why, even her stockings are down to her heels."

"But, my dear madam, she will mend; she will grow older," interposed Ryder.

"Yes, but see how plain she is, with smallpox spoiling her skin."

"The stage will hide such trifling blemishes," was the optimistic retort.

Dolly had been sent out of the room to make herself tidy, and at this minute she came back, looking quite neat and smart. Ryder, gazing well into her face, said, with a laugh—

"Smallpox, aye, and very small too! Here, Dolly, get up the part of Phœbe in *As You Like It.*"

Dolly was neither bashful nor bold; she was indeed thoughtless enough and high-spirited enough to do a thing without troubling about responsibilities or consequences; so she got up the part and went through it in public with the happy carelessness of a schoolboy, whatever the terrors might have been that she experienced at the first sight of the audience. That audience accepted her with good humour, but saw no occasion to be overwhelming in its praise, and indeed its attention was more likely concentrated upon the prominent actors. However, she had found her *métier*; she felt that she could act, and she studied without ceasing to acquire the qualities necessary to help her to success.

The definite assertions in this story are wrong. Thus the Blands were in Dublin long before 1780; if Hester made such a terrible failure on her introduction, she somewhat retrieved it, for she was acting in that year; then there is no trace in any theatrical record of Grace acting anywhere, and Dorothy did not begin her stage career as Phœbe. Her first appearance was in *The Virgin Unmasked*, on the 3rd of November, 1779.¹ *As You Like It* was put on later in November, and Dorothy may have taken the part then, but it was not her first attempt. The first playbill now existing which includes her name is one dated May 20, 1780, when *The Governess* was acted for O'Keefe's benefit.

At that time Ryder was at his wit's end to provide variety and draw an audience, so in this play he hit on the plan of a topsy-turvy cast—men taking women's

¹ Mr. W. J. Lawrence, who is one of our first authorities upon the British stage.

parts and vice versa—Dorothy being allotted the prominent character of Lopez, and gaining great applause for her symmetrical figure and beautiful legs. Before she had been acting long she persuaded Ryder to let her introduce a song, and this brought her into especial favour. Her voice was not highly trained and did not go well with accompaniment; but it was so sweet, and she had already so mastered the art of throwing her emotions into her tones, that a song from her would often have to be repeated twice to a delighted audience. Her first and one of her most famous songs was that of "Melton Oysters," which was especially popular in Dublin, as its title was deemed to be "Miltown Oysters"—Miltown being a suburb of Dublin, near Donnybrook Fair, a spot historic as a recreation and sporting resort, where refreshments of all sorts, from goat's milk to whisky, and from buns to oysters might be obtained by the holiday-making people. This song she persuaded Ryder to let her introduce, and however dubious was his consent, the result was extremely pleasing to him. Its first verse ran—

"There was a clever, likely lass,
Just come to town from Glos'ter,
And she did get her livelihood
By crying Melton Oysters."

The one farcical comedy part which Dolly essayed in Ireland was Miss Tomboy in *The Romp*, the only hoyden character which she acted at that early stage of her career, for the value of those plays had not yet become apparent, the audience even then considering tragedy more enjoyable than farce.

Another thing that the girl did particularly well was

speaking the prologue and epilogue, which have long been discarded from our evening's amusement at the theatre; so a special prologue was written for her in the character of an Irish Volunteer, for which she had to wear the soldier's uniform and strut about the stage with martial weapons—a proceeding which drew shouts of applause from the young folks of Dublin.

But Ryder at that time was fast going downhill, and his actors were not always paid, so Dolly and her family sometimes "experienced the severest effects of poverty"; and according to *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* for August 1792, "Prudence obliged Mrs. Francis to forsake the Crow Street standard" and go over to Smock Alley, where she got an engagement from its new manager Daly, and though the salary was low, yet it was punctually paid, which at least allowed them to live.

Dorothy made a great impression upon some people while in Ireland; one of whom was Betsy Sheridan, later Mrs. Lefanu. One night she took a Mr. Chamberlayne to the theatre, and, pointing to Dorothy, said—

"That little girl, if she lives, will be some time or other the first comic actress in England or Ireland. She is a Miss Francis. She has not been long on the stage, but for chastity of acting, *naïveté*, and *being* the character she represents, young as she is, she surpasses what could have been expected; but mark my words, she will one day or other be a favourite and the first in her line of acting."

Mr. Chamberlayne wrote down these words and sealed them in an envelope, which eventually passed into the possession of the Editor of the *Gentleman's*

Magazine. The envelope was not opened until 1822, and its contents were published in June 1824.

It is open to doubt whether there was any time in her life when Dolly Bland was serenely, quietly and safely happy, when she could "look before and after" and see happiness both ways. Such a time could not have come to her in Dublin, and it certainly was not hers in the next stage of her career. Yet it may be that it seemed always within her reach, for she was not given to retrospection or anticipation. For her, to-day was the point of life, and if all were well—or ill—to-day, why gloat or worry over past or future. It was, however, a good thing that she could not forecast events; that she could struggle on more or less gaily and not ask too minutely what price was eventually to be paid at the Dublin theatre for the best woman's parts.

One curious mistake which was made about Dorothy was by a young soldier named Pryse Lockhart Gordon, one which he crystallized in his volume of *Personal Memoirs* many years later, and which has without fail been copied by each successive biographer of Dorothy Bland.

With one exception, she acted in Dublin as Miss Francis, and events point to the fact that the Blands must have made it a condition of their assistance that their name should be dropped. Mr. Gordon, however, declares that when he was stationed in Cork in 1778 "Miss Phillips" was taken there by Daly, and acted for £1 a week, for which sum her father, a scene-shifter, threw in his services. The girl's benefit was a failure, and the group of young men, of whom Gordon was one, threatened violence until the manager

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promised her another benefit night, which was well attended, bringing the young actress £40.

This account has caused one of the "mysteries" of Dorothy's birth, and, as has been said, *The Dictionary of National Biography* favours this statement as to the low origin of Dorothy's father. But Pryse Lockhart Gordon, as military records prove, went to Cork in 1778, and left Cork for foreign service in 1780; while Dolly Francis's first visit to that city was in 1781, and she never acted anywhere under the name of Phillips. Mr. W. J. Lawrence, in his interest concerning the stage, made special investigations into this matter, and he discovered that there *was* a Miss Phillips acting in Cork in the year 1778 whose father *was* at the time a scene-shifter, but who had no connection with our heroine. This Miss Phillips was two years younger than Dorothy, and gained great renown later as Mrs. Crouch, acting at Drury Lane, and not only becoming a bitter rival to our heroine, but at times causing her much unhappiness.

Herbert unconsciously gives evidence of Dorothy's being in Cork in 1781, for he tells that when visiting some friends there the next year he heard a little musical prodigy singing a song about her love for Ti-co-thy, and, on asking how she had learnt it, was told that a lady named Francis, who had been acting there the previous summer, had taught it to the child.

It is to be hoped that at last the lie has been overtaken, but one never knows; a romantic lie is dear to the imagination, and is not given up without a pang.

Another incident, and one of a tender nature, took place also at this time, it being twisted somewhat out of shape by Sir Jonah Barrington in his account of

Dorothy's Dublin career, and this was her first serious offer of marriage.

A certain young soldier named Charles Powlett Doyne, son of the Dean of Leighlin, who was cornet in the 2nd Regiment of Horse in Dublin, fell in love with the attractive young actress at first sight, and felt that the only happiness in the world for him was to make her his wife. So he took counsel with his friends, of whom Barrington was one, and as these friends were also very young, they advised him to go in and win. But the courageous cornet found that there were other people to consider besides Dorothy and himself, and that Mrs. Bland was adamant to him and his desires. She rightly saw that Doyne could not support a wife, his commission was of the smallest and his private fortune was little larger; she also had no desire to be bereft of her chief means of support, so however much Dorothy liked the young man, she was induced to give him up.

The queer thing is that Barrington, who was on the scene, gives his friend wrong rank, wrong regiment and wrong *locale*, saying that he was a lieutenant of the 3rd Heavy Horse stationed at Waterford, and to this adds the slighting inference that he was ugly. The facts being that Doyne met, loved and lost Dolly in 1780 while he was a cornet stationed in Dublin; that he never was stationed in Waterford, though two years after Dorothy had left Ireland he was at Clonmel, which is very near. His lieutenancy was gained in June 1781, some months after he had left Dublin in a very inconsolable frame of mind. However, in 1785 he married a Miss Vicars, who was an heiress, and a year later he left the army.

CHAPTER III

THAT RUFFIAN DALY

"Her face, if not exactly beautiful, was irresistibly agreeable ; her person and gait were eminently elastic ; her voice in singing perfectly sweet and melodious, and in speaking clear and impressive."—JOHN ADOLPHUS *on Mrs. Jordan.*

"His feathers, which in beauty vied
With all the peacock's glittering pride,
Were trimmed with artfulness and care
T'attract the notice of the fair.

PETER PINDAR, Jun.

IN Ryder's company at Crow Street was a man named Richard Daly, who by some was described as better as business man than as actor. Herbert says of him that he had a good memory, a good person, a good wardrobe and good parts to play, which were the entire constitution of his good acting ; and in *Roscius*, a short-lived paper, it was declared that his acting was slovenly. When he first played for Ryder it was with a Mrs. Lyster, once Miss Barsanti, who was fortunate enough to have money ; she also could earn money, and the combination of possessions and talent was too much for Richard Daly, so Mrs. Lyster became his wife.

This man was in one respect Irish of the Irish, for he loved a fight ; in another he was alien to his race, as the Irish are renowned for their care for the honour of their women. He, however, was an extreme sensualist, and allowed nothing to stand in the way of his desires ; thus as manager he became a byword in Dublin for his baseness and cruelty to young actresses.

He was a member of the Fire-eaters' Club, and prided himself on his bravery and his dexterity with sword and pistol; his number of duels being put down as sixteen in two years, three with swords and thirteen with pistols. It was a pistol duel that he fought with Jonah Barrington, who affirmed that he had never spoken to Daly, had scarcely ever spoken of him, and never knew why the challenge was sent.

Barrington and his second, known as "Balloon" Crosby, because he had constructed the first balloon ever made in Ireland, sat up all night making pistols from a number of odd locks, barrels and stocks. When they had succeeded and drunk chocolate followed by cherry brandy, they started out for the fight. Barrington thus describes his opponent's appearance—

"He was a very fine-looking young fellow, but with such a squint that it was totally impossible to say what he looked at, except his nose, of which he never lost sight. His dress made me ashamed of my own; he wore a pea-green coat, a large tucker with a diamond brooch stuck in it, a three-cocked hat with a gold button, loop and tassels, and silk stockings, and a *couteau-de-chasse* hung gracefully at his thigh."

This gorgeous figure made Barrington uneasy, for he liked neither his steady position, showy clothes nor his squinting eye; but the delighted Crosby soon had his men in position, crying—

"Hip the macaroni! Never look at the head or the heels, the hip for ever, my boy."

As soon as Daly took his stand, about nine paces off, and presented his pistol, Barrington let fly, and, as he says, "without losing a single second and with-

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out taking aim," which is but another proof that the punctiliousness said to be observed at duels was on occasions but a sham. Daly staggered, put his hand to his breast, and cried, "I'm hit," without having fired a shot.

The three young men gathered round, opened his waistcoat and found a black spot about the size of half-a-crown directly over his breast-bone. The diamond brooch had saved the macaroni's life! a fragment of the trinket still sticking into the bone. But for the vanity of that brooch the future of Dorothy Bland might—who knows?—have been very different, for Daly would of a certainty have been killed.

It is amusing to find that Barrington, who was quite ready to kill Daly in this foolish affair and to look upon the deed as an honourable achievement, was shocked at the sight of the diamonds sticking into Daly's breast-bone. Crosby, on the other hand, cursed and stamped over the bad powder, then laid hold of the jewellery and pulled it out. Daly put his handkerchief to his breast with a bow, Barrington returned a deeper bow, and so they parted, excepting that when the latter asked for an explanation of the challenge Daly replied that he would give none, for Rule 8 observed by Fire-eaters commanded that if a party challenged accepted the challenge without asking the reason of it, the challenger was not bound to divulge it afterwards!

However, it was not to Daly's advantage to fight duels when he was at work, though he and Kemble did, in 1785, determine to take each other's lives, and to make sure of the deed arranged to meet in secret and fight their quarrel out. Kindly friends, though,

had warned the sheriffs and so saved both a good actor and a weak villain.

But in a usual way after his youth Daly's tastes lay towards cards and young actresses. He would have been thought the last person to join a Temperance Club, yet he was a constant attendant at one such, where the only refreshments allowed were biscuits and water. But then it was not altogether strange that many of the most prominent bloods of the town were also members of this club, for its one purpose was gambling. This was the man who was to give Dorothy Francis her first insight into the ways of the libertine, and who was to awaken a lasting hatred in her heart.

It was in 1780 that Daly, concentrating his energies upon an attempt to give himself a permanent and lucrative footing on the Dublin stage, became lessee of the hitherto neglected Smock Alley Theatre. One chronicler says that the theatre was opened by Daly on Wednesday, November 3, 1780, with a prelude named *Smock Alley Secrets, or the Manager Worried*. This may have been so, for Dorothy had joined his company before August 1781, when they all went to Waterford. Oxberry, in his *Reminiscences*, says that on their return Dorothy was given a salary of £3 a week, which is hardly credible, seeing the poverty of the theatres, and the relative value of money at that time. When the grand opening of Smock Alley was made in November 1781, and Kemble was engaged, he only had £5 a week. However, Daly may have had reasons for ingratiating his little actress, and if Herbert is to be trusted, she had money to spare, for he says that she often tipped him a crown. It is to be supposed that the Blands were still contributing some

pittance to Grace, and there is evidence of strained feeling between the families on one occasion: the report being that Dorothy, angered by hearing of some slighting remark, with her characteristic impulsiveness, had herself announced on the play-bills as Miss Bland, instead of Miss Francis. This lasted but a few days, for, moved either by threats or reassurances, she soon resumed the latter name.

When Daly made his great flourish and engaged Kemble, that young gentleman was still but a provincial performer, who had by no means attained to anything like his later celebrity, and £5 a week was a very good salary to him. *Hamlet*, *The Belle's Stratagem*, and *The Count of Narbonne* were played, the last being a piece dramatized from Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* by Jephson. Dorothy took the part of Adelaide in this play, and made a particular success; while Kemble, in this Dublin engagement, won such praise that his future London career was assured.

The exact facts about Dorothy and Daly can now never be known, but she must by this time have been well aware of the man's character, which, according to all the chroniclers, was that of a villain of promiscuous tendencies, whatever his other virtues.

The following severity from the pen of William Oxberry, the comedian, is but an example of others—

“It was the practice of this hollow sensualist to advance money to the ladies he had a design on, and then second his attempt with an arrest for debt. He had often recourse to brutal violence. Even now, when that weak villain's bones have returned to the corruption that best befitted them, we could find it in our hearts to call them from the grave to be burnt as

a sacrifice to offended decency; and in saying this, we arrogate no particular virtue to ourselves: we do not mean to condemn in one sweeping clause the race called (falsely called) men of pleasure; but let them fight their battles fairly, at all events, and not win by meanness (or violence, should be added), that which should be gained by favour."

Daly did not find it so easy with Dorothy Bland; she was only just twenty and, like other girls, looked forward to romance and happiness with some one whom she loved. Thus the adulterous advances made by him terrified her. He was coarse enough to say that he loved her, and this love which he gave so freely could have had no pretty-pretty sentiment in it, no honesty; it meant the enslavement of body and mind, rough and lewd handling, such as Mrs. Romanzini, an Italian Jewess, complained of when her daughter of about fifteen had the misfortune to come under Daly's management.

"Vat you vant vid my daughter?" she asked angrily. "You are always running after her and touching her. You have one ver fine wife of your own, so I beg you will leave my child alone."

Daly is said to have obeyed on that occasion; but he was not always so amenable. If the actress proved difficult it was easy for him to change familiarity into threat or bribe, and if he foresaw that his chase would be arduous, he used a little diplomacy. These methods were tried upon Dorothy, seemingly without avail, and though there are various versions of the affair, all agree that it was by force rather than consent that the young actress was brought to submission.

One of Daly's approved plans was deliberately to degrade a girl from good to inferior parts with less

pay, and get her so thoroughly broken that the only escape would seem to be in his arms, and it is significant that Dolly's name was anything but prominent in the theatre during the first part of 1781. It is very possible, too, that during that year the family had been reduced to great straits, a situation which implies debt.

When an actress had been reduced to this condition it was Daly's gentle plan to sympathize and offer to lend her a sum of money, which the poor thing had little choice but to accept, perhaps regarding it as unaffected kindness on Daly's part.

If the girl could not be won with neglect or kindness Daly then had a new system of torture, and that was to threaten arrest for debt. In face of that what could a friendless young girl do, for what was a debtor's prison to such but a living death from which only real death could release her? This creature seems to have gone through the whole series of his little methods with Dorothy, and *The Great Illegitimates* affirms that Daly's loan was made after a severe illness on the part of Mrs. Bland, which took all their money, and continues that threats and cajolery all being unsuccessful, Daly ended with pure violence. She was by some means decoyed to the house of a person dependent upon him, and there forcibly detained, "until every unfair advantage had been taken of her defenceless situation." *The Secret History* and other accounts add that no sooner "did she escape from so cruel and infamous a treachery," than she "fled from Dublin, and accompanied by her mother went to Leeds." In these accounts truth lies, but the form in which that truth is presented varies with each writer's sentiments and ideas. Dorothy certainly did not flee from Dublin directly Daly had reduced her to his will;

on the contrary, she was given very good parts, and continued to play at Smock Alley for some months. From the beginning of 1782 she acted constantly with Kemble, taking the parts of Adelaide in *The Count of Narbonne*, Charlotte in *The Gamester*, for Kemble's benefit; Selina to his Bajazet in *Tamerlane*; Lady Anne to his Glo'ster in *Richard III*; Miss Ogle in Mrs. Cowley's *Belle's Stratagem*; Louisa in *The Discovery*, and Maria in *The School for Scandal*. On May 14 she was Katherine to Kemble's Petruchio; and on the 16th of that month she spoke the Prologue before Burgoyne's musical comedy, *The Maid of the Oaks*.

From that day she disappeared from the Dublin boards!

What could have happened then? Whatever had passed between her and Daly, she hated him with all her heart, yet she must have remained in his company for some months after she had surrendered her body to his will. It is probable that the situation had become too repulsive to be borne any longer, and that there was a desperate quarrel, in which Daly had the upper hand all along. He may have seen what was coming, and true to his treacherous nature have kept back her salary. In a quarrel the impulsive girl would, as was her wont, betray all that was in her heart without thought of the future; and perhaps it was then—and not earlier—that the threat of prison unless she repaid the early loan descended upon her bewildered mind. The very idea of a debtor's prison put her into a panic, as it did thirty years later, and she determined to flee from Dublin with her family.

Young Herbert, who was in entire ignorance of the reason of the flight, says that he saw them before they

left, and knowing that they were going in poverty, he pressed into Dorothy's hands a little bag containing many of the crowns which she had bestowed upon him, but she gave it him back, saying—

“No, I will not; if I were more distressed I would not touch a penny of what I had hoped you would have taken in good part.”

Then, forgetting herself, she proceeded to give him hints about acting, as she knew he wanted to become an actor.

In *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* (1792) it is asserted that the fruits of “an accident began to be visible, and a variety of reasons pressed her immediate departure.” This is scarcely probable, as her child was not born until six months later, and she could have well hidden the matter until the end of the season.

However, knowing what fate awaited her before the end of the year, without luggage and with little money, Dorothy, her mother, sister and brother, fled from Dublin to England in June 1782. There can be no doubt of the girl's feelings for Daly, for no bribe or entreaty would induce her later to act in Dublin while he was there, though once he offered her a princely sum to help to restore something like glory to his theatre.

It may be objected that Daly did not habitually pursue the system described above, and that the whole account was intended to shield Dorothy's name from lightness. But there are many proofs that he followed this plan of threatened imprisonment on many occasions. There was the case of the young and pretty Mrs. Esten, who was deserted by her husband and who was thus treated by Daly, having been arrested



FRANCES DALY, MRS. ALSOP
DAUGHTER OF DOROTHY JORDAN

FROM AN ENGRAVING IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. J. F. FULLER



DOROTHY JORDAN AND RICHARD DALY
FROM AN ENGRAVING IN THE "TOWN AND COUNTRY MAGAZINE"
DECEMBER 1786

30. VINAU
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at his instigation. For this he was attacked in the *Dublin Evening Post* by its proprietor-editor, Magee, against whom Daly had the temerity to press a libel suit. During the hearing of the case the following letter from the chivalrous Magee to the actress was read in Court—

“August 21, 1789.—Mrs. Esten, on the immediate receipt fly to Mr. Edwards, bookseller, Cork. I have enclosed him for your use a draft on London for twenty guineas. Fly! Fly! I know you were arrested by a ruffian in uniform on Friday last at dinner. I heard of the outrage, and instantly flew to the bailiff’s lock-up house—to the Marine Hotel. There I learned that you were forced to Cork.¹ I know how you have been used by that villain, that ruffian Daly. Fly! Fly! I leave this for London on the 1st of September; leave address at James Woodmason’s, Leadenhall Street. Yours, J. MAGEE.—To Mrs. Esten, Cork.”²

In later years, when Daly got into a habit of summoning Astley for infringing the rights of his patent, his counsel stated that the penalties recoverable would be given to the Lying-in Hospital. In reply, the opposing counsel said: “That it was notorious no man in Dublin had contributed more largely, *in one way*, to the Lying-in Hospital than Mr. Daly; and it was therefore but fair, if he recovered in this action, that he should give them the *cash*; but,” continued the facetious counsel, “although Mr. Daly’s attachment to *good pieces* is proverbial, we don’t choose that he shall monopolize all the *good pieces* in Dublin, from *My Grandmother* down to *Miss in her Teens*.”

¹ Daly owned the Cork theatre also.

² *A Curious Genealogical Medley*, by J. F. Fuller, F.S.A.

CHAPTER IV

“IT ! THE GREAT TREASURE”

“Just emblem of all lovely nature,
Ordain’d to charm by ev’ry feature,
Reigning unrivall’d in thy art,
Delight of ev’ry feeling heart ;
Applause await and crown thy wishes,
Nations accord, ‘She all possesses !’”

“My acquaintances are so censorious (oh, ‘tis a wicked censorious world, Mr. Horner !), I say, are so censorious, and detracting, that perhaps they’ll talk to the prejudice of my honour.”—*The Country Wife*, by WILLIAM WYCHERLEY.

TATE WILKINSON had become renowned in the theatrical world by 1782 more by his powers of mimicry than by his acting, and still more by his remarkable energy in organizing the work of several theatres at once. He first appeared on the stage in Dublin in 1757, when in the old Aungier Street Theatre he acted with Grace Philipps. Later he became known as the lessee and manager of the York, Leeds and Hull theatres, and he also took companies to Doncaster, Wakefield, Sheffield and other towns in Yorkshire. In addition to this he from time to time acted in many of the provincial towns, and even in Covent Garden, thus earning for himself the title of “The Wandering Patentee.” In the eyes of the law actors were but strolling vagabonds, in the eyes of the public they were the public’s most obliged and obedient servants, ready meekly to apologize if they failed to please, and were expected to look upon it as but justice if their property were wrecked by an ill-

mannered mob; in the eyes of society the best actor was not fit to tie the shoelace of a gentleman nor to call himself a gentleman. Tate Wilkinson, however, was the son of a Doctor of Divinity who had been chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and who, for solemnizing marriages in defiance of the Marriage Act of George II, was sentenced to transportation to America, but died at Plymouth on the outgoing voyage. Tate Wilkinson finished his education at Harrow, and was, as a contemporary said, a polished gentleman; yet, in spite of all the social prejudices against actors, he chose the despised profession that he might indulge his love of mimicry.

By 1782 his position and fame had long been assured, and Mrs. Bland, who seems from this point to have taken her husband's real name, turned her thoughts to him in her necessity.

Wilkinson was at that time stationed at Leeds, and there the Blands finished their journey from Dublin, arriving early in July. But in what a plight were they!

How was it that within six weeks of acting the principal woman's parts for months in Dublin, Dorothy and her family arrived at Leeds so ill-dressed that Tate Wilkinson was ashamed of them? To put it in his own delicate way, they were not “so well accoutred as I could have wished for their sakes and mine own.” Dorothy was destitute of clothing, the others were in a deplorable state, without money, friends, acquaintances, or any possibility of credit. The girl's attraction depended on her animation, yet here on first seeing the actor from whom she desired work she was in such a state of depression that there was no prettiness in her

looks; on the contrary, she was dejected and melancholy, the tears slowly dropping, so sad and so helpless that the man's pity was awakened and he checked the decided "No" which rose to his lips at the request that he would give her a trial.

There can be but the one explanation that I have given: that in a panic Dorothy rushed from Dublin, without her salary and without luggage, ready to starve rather than to remain longer in Daly's vindictive power.

On their arrival at Leeds Mrs. Bland wrote to Wilkinson, and he went to see them at their inn, being most unfavourably impressed by them and their surroundings. Mrs. Bland, poor woman, whom he recognized as the Grace Philipps of a quarter of a century earlier, was so eager for his approbation that she overdid the praises of her daughter, talking so fulsomely that Wilkinson was disgusted, and at once resolved to have nothing to do with them.

The thing which most upset him, however, was that, having heard Mrs. Bland talk *ad nauseam*, he turned to Dorothy with the question—

"But what do you play? Comedy, tragedy, farce, or what?"

"All!" replied the girl, with dull indifference.

Wilkinson gasped and stared; and Dorothy, in telling the story in later life, would add—

"Sir, I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished."

Yet the pathos of Dorothy's aspect was too much for his kind heart, and he compromised by going away for half an hour to think matters over. He was not only horrified by their poverty and distress, but fearful

of the load which Dorothy was bearing. He could pay an actress sufficient for her own support, but sufficient for the support of four persons was quite another thing, and he was afraid of what demands might be made upon him. He came to the conclusion that he might at least see what the young lady could do, and with that intention returned. Dorothy, however, declared that she was not then equal even to repeating some lines, and would rather have a fair trial on the boards, to which the manager reluctantly agreed.

The trouble probably was that the Blands were all hungry, and Dorothy was too low to be able to put any heart into her words. Wilkinson ordered a bottle of madeira, and while they were drinking it Mrs. Bland gave him the news of Dublin, which allowed time for her daughter to pull herself together, the wine helping her and sending a warmer current through her veins. Seeing this, Wilkinson again suggested that she should speak a few lines from the part of Callista in *The Fair Penitent*, a play then much appreciated, and she agreed.

On hearing her wonderful voice Wilkinson was conquered, and records, "I felt inwardly surprised and delighted, and could not repress my hopes and my compliments, and assured her I was lucky in such an acquaintance. She, on her part, said if she could please me she did not fear the audience; for Mr. Wilkinson was a man (though a stranger to her) of such well-known honour that his word and direction should be her guide; she knew if she had merit it would soon be found out by the public; and her diligence, her anxiety to deserve my favour, should be unbounded; and gratitude being her natural good quality, I should

ever receive that payment for my kindness to her in her destitute case. And so we complimented and flattered, and flattered and complimented, till we really found a sudden impulse of regard, and parted that noon with mutual good wishes and assurances."

The good man went from that strange interview with a pleased mind and a feeling that he had really found a treasure, and he could not hide his satisfaction, for, joining his company for a rehearsal, he entertained them with a description of the little "female Proteus" who had applied to him.

Wilkinson had also a further motive of association to induce him to consider Dorothy as a possible member of his company, for the unmarried Miss Philipps—her mother's sister, who had been on the stage in minor companies presumably ever since that visit to London—had been acting sometimes in York and elsewhere under his management.

In the *Elixir of Life* it is asserted—though Wilkinson does not give the incident either in his *Memoirs* which were published at York in 1790, nor in *The Wandering Patentee* which saw the light five years later—that he was from the first prejudiced against the Blands by Daly, who had written to him that Dorothy "was the worst of wretched actresses." If that is true, the letter would probably have followed and not preceded the arrival of the impecunious family, and so would have received no notice. It certainly did not precede them, for Wilkinson announces their coming in his most entertaining book with—"The MRS. JORDAN suddenly starts upon me at Leeds with her mother, Mrs. G. Phillips, Master and Miss Francis her brother and sister, all hand in hand."

Once having made up his mind to try Dorothy, the manager, without asking questions, billed his newcomer as Miss Bland, somewhat to the mother's disturbance, who told him that for the future the name of Francis was to be used in public. She was hoping not only for the continuance of the dole the Blands made her, but that they would at least do something substantial for the boy, the son of Francis Bland, and she had no wish to offend them.

Besides billing the new actress well, Wilkinson did everything he could to ensure a good audience for her first night, with the result that the theatre was crowded on July 11, 1782, when Dorothy duly appeared as Callista in *The Fair Penitent*. She was horribly nervous as she stood in the wings; it is said that she always lost her head before going on the stage, but that the first step on the boards banished every atom of self-consciousness. Thus it was on this first performance in England, and she pleased the audience, which was inclined to be critical first and pleasant only as an afterthought. She had stipulated that, the play being over, she should go on again to sing the song of “The Greenwood Laddie,” a song with which she was accustomed to get good results; and Tate Wilkinson did his best to dissuade her from it.

“How can you die pathetically and then come on all alive and singing a pretty ballad?” he asked.

But she would not be moved, so after her death as Callista she appeared again in a simple frock and little mob-cap, and sang the song with such effect that both the audience and the manager were fascinated by the melody of her voice. She played sufficiently and successfully enough that month to have a benefit on

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August 6, and then the whole company went to York.

For their work in that city Wilkinson had prepared bills announcing Miss Francis, and Mrs. Bland once more interfered, sending him a note in which she said that for very important reasons the name of Francis must be changed. His natural retort was, "Why not Bland, then?" Dorothy answered that that would injure them too much with her father's relatives, and it is obvious that in changing her name from Francis her design was again to hide her identity from them. Wilkinson gives two different accounts of how the word Jordan was chosen, and others have added their ideas: "For pregnant reasons the name of Francis gave place to that of Jordan," flippantly asserted one wag.

One of Wilkinson's accounts runs that he said to her, "You have crossed the water, my dear, so I'll call you Jordan!" Then, in telling the tale in later life, he always added, "And, by Sam, if she didn't take my joke in earnest, and call herself Mrs. Jordan ever since."

His more restrained explanation is that he and the Blands met to talk it over, and ultimately the name of Jordan was adopted; "and a good name it has proved for her credit, and will be remembered with the tribute of honour to her undoubted excellent talents while the stage is permitted any share in history or conversation."

One newspaper account of her life says that Dorothy herself explained her name by saying to a friend that she was sure that in Ireland she had shed enough tears to overflow the River Jordan, on which the friend pointed out that there was a name for her choice.

But, so far as I can prove, this was another of those incidents in her life of which Dorothy alone kept the

secret. Wilkinson in a vague way, and Boaden, who wrote of her in 1831, both connect the choice of the name with the Miss Philipps who was then dying in the very city which the company had reached. Boaden remarks in his usual discursive fashion—he was a wonderful person for talking around the subject and never arriving at the point—

“The reader must be made acquainted with the reason which produced this new decision as to the name on the arrival at York. . . . The fact is that her aunt, Miss Philipps, who had also been an actress in the York company, and was now lying dangerously ill, had that last infirmity of the Welsh mind, a high value for the families to which she claimed alliance—the Ap-Griffiths, the Winnys, and the Aprices of Wales. She had earnestly entreated to see her sister, Mrs. Bland, and to welcome her niece, whom she pronounced to be already an honour to the stock from which she derived alike her theatrical and lineal honours, and as this near relative was at the point of death . . . prudence and affection concurred in allowing the last wish of an aunt who felt her interest so strongly.”

Now what was the wish? To see her sister or to agree to the change of name? Boaden starts to give the reason for the change of name and ends by telling nothing.

My conjecture is that this biographer intended to give the real information, but that his habit of slurring anything which would detract from the honour of the connections of his heroine—he does it all through his book—made him temporize and reduce his information to the finest point.

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When hunting for confirmation of my suspicions concerning the birth of Dorothy Bland I found, as has been told, a third entry in the book in St. Martin's vestry, to this effect—

Aug. 14, 1761. [Baptized] Dorothy, [daughter of] Ignatius and Mary Jordan. [Born] Aug. 14.

Now this was at a time when Miss Philipps was most probably in London with her sister and settled near her in St. Martin's parish. She may have made a marriage which was unhappy, or of short duration; she may not even have married Ignatius at all, only the absurdly ponderous name makes it impossible to connect the young man with any lightness of thought. If some trouble occurred and she found it necessary soon to go back to her work alone, it was certain that she would take it up again under the name by which she had so far been known, and she certainly would have no reason to confide her private affairs to any one, certainly not to such an inveterate gossip as Tate Wilkinson.

Thus my theory is that the little Dorothy Jordan who was born so weakly that she had to be baptized the same day, and then most likely died, was the daughter of Miss M. Philipps, and that the wish to which "both prudence and affection" conceded was that the girl who seemed on the road to fame should bear with her the memory of the little cousin whom she had never seen, and so warm the soul of the dying woman with the idea that her child would not be wholly forgotten. But this is all theory drawn from the association of names, and the "wish" of Miss Philipps.

Miss Philipps had been acting for Tate Wilkinson

for some years until 1769, when she ended her engagement with him in angry jealousy of a young actress named Baker, for the elder lady believed greatly in her own prowess and could not bear to see another take her parts. After that she acted in many provincial towns ; her name is recorded at Manchester, for instance, in 1771.

If Boaden, awed by having known personally and having made himself very useful to Mrs. Jordan, and by having on various occasions come in contact with the Duke of Clarence, was too subservient to his king, William IV, to speak out, such is not the character of Wilkinson. He had the fault or the virtue of all good *raconteurs*, he never could resist telling a good story. As regards Miss Philipps, he also betrays some slight resentment, which makes him relish making such a statement about the meeting of the relatives as “She had plenty of clothes and linen (at the pawnbroker’s); she bequeathed them to her beloved niece (which under the rose was not at that time by any means unacceptable).” He also confides to his public that Miss Philipps had a fatal weakness—probably the drink or drug habit.

That Daly in his spite did threaten to sue Dorothy is quite true. She had signed a contract to work for so long with him, and she left before that time was up, the full penalty being £250. So the choice was put before her, either to return or to pay the money, which, however, was really a choice between returning to Dublin or going to prison. But by the time this affair had grown serious, Tate Wilkinson was perfectly persuaded that he had obtained a treasure, and he had exerted himself to befriend that treasure to the best of his ability. Probably thinking that her acting would be

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better for a little tuition, he had introduced her to a dramatic critic, an old gentleman named Cornelius Swan, who was much respected in York, and who thought highly of Dorothy's powers, though he was also certain that no one could approach himself in the knowledge of how things should be done.

Mr. Swan undertook to give Dorothy lessons, and he was so eager to see her improvement that it is said that when she was ill (perhaps during her stay at York) he was admitted to her bedchamber, and would sit by the side of her bed, wrapped up and adorned in Mrs. Bland's old red cloak, and so instruct the girl in how to act the character of Zara in the tragedy of that name by Hill.

“Really, Wilkinson,” said he, “I have given the Jordan but three lessons, but she is so adroit at receiving my instructions that I swear that she repeats the character as well as Mrs. Cibber ever did; nay, let me do the Jordan justice, for I do not exceed when with truth I declare Jordan speaks it as well as I could myself !”

His friendship went further than his praise, for when he knew the dreadful predicament in which Dorothy was placed, he actually paid the £250, rather than lose so promising a pupil, or let the stage be robbed of one for whom he expected fame. It was done with many assurances of lasting friendship and declarations that for the future she must consider herself his adopted daughter; but the exacting manager noted that he “did not prove a tender, fond parent, for at his death he did not leave her a shilling.”

Wilkinson had started his young actress with fifteen shillings a week—little enough, it may be thought, and

much less than she had been receiving ; but then these small theatres did not bring in much money, and it was hard work to pay all and still retain something. But the race week at York was not only successful, it made the intelligent Patentee see the need for keeping his “treasure” in his own hand. Among those who came down to the races that year, and who came every year, was an actor known at Drury Lane and in the profession as Gentleman Smith, and he spent the first evening of his stay in the theatre. There to his surprise he found a girl who gave great promise, and with whose acting he was so much impressed that he repeated his visits to the play every evening, watching Dorothy in many different parts, and confiding his opinion of her ability to the genial manager. To guard against thefts and accidents the alert Wilkinson at once doubled Dorothy’s salary, and gave her an extraordinary benefit, “for her services were truly valuable, and she not only wanted but truly deserved every encouragement.” One wonders if he would have been so sure of this if he had not also been afraid that Gentleman Smith might lure her to London. To make matters entirely safe he, as soon as he got back to Leeds, had the articles of a long engagement settled, and thereafter he felt less alarmed concerning any reports that Gentleman Smith might give in London of Mrs. Jordan’s cleverness.

But in one respect Dorothy had succeeded too well for her comfort. The absurd practice of women taking men’s parts was tried by Wilkinson, and one actor left the company in disgust because his part was given to Mrs. Jordan ; the actresses, also, were too jealous to be friendly. “Why should this new-comer have two

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benefits in three months?" they asked; which was indeed too sore a point to be forgotten; thus as soon as Dorothy appeared in the Green Room in the evenings she would hear some such conversation as—

"Pray, ma'am, when is your benefit?"

"Oh, I cannot say. When is yours? for I see Mrs. Jordan begins with one next Wednesday."

They all turned against her, and if it had not been for the support of Wilkinson—for she had gregarious instincts, and to be sent to Coventry by those around her depressed her miserably—she would have failed under the daily snubbing she received. Her companions could not believe that her talents were in any way superior to their own; they put her good fortune down to the partiality of the manager; and he, totally indifferent to their attitude to him, could only feel that it was impossible to let slip one who, to use his own words, "gave uncommon labour and study to the theatre"; one whose spirits (temper?), as he quaintly says, "were never violent except when scolding the manager or having an empty pocket."

Dorothy went with the company to other Yorkshire towns (Wakefield, Doncaster and Sheffield), and it was at the last place that she had a narrow escape of her life; for when playing the part of the chambermaid, with Knight, the Liverpool manager, as footman in *The Fair American*, a drop-scene on a heavy roller fell suddenly at their feet. A few inches more to the back and Mrs. Jordan would never more have been heard of, while Knight would have had his career cut short. During this visit to Sheffield the Duke of Norfolk—he whom the Prince of Wales once made so frightfully drunk on brandy at the Pavilion—developed an

admiration for Dorothy and would bring a troop of friends to see her act whenever she was in that town.

But to return to the jealous ladies: one of the most jealous was a Mrs. Smith—“who toiled hard in my vineyard and earned her reward,” says Wilkinson. This lady regarded her reward, however, as something more than work or wages; she required to stand first in public and managerial estimation. Unfortunately for this ambition, she was that summer and autumn in that condition which a woman desires to be who loves her lord, and the fear of her enforced rest acted on her nerves, producing an exceptional amount of spite and rivalry. However, inexorable Nature decreed that Mrs. Smith should lay down her arms, and Dorothy Jordan joyfully took up the burden of the fight. Wilkinson says that the latter would learn a new part in twenty-four hours, and that she played night after night with unremitting zeal. She, too, knew that her time was short, but she made the best of it both for her manager and herself. It would have been better for Mrs. Smith had she been content comfortably to let things slide, for the laugh would have been on her side in November and December. But she was so determined to allow no advantage to her rival by a lengthy absence, that “in a short time of her lying-in” (I cannot decide whether this means before or after, for Tate Wilkinson adds “though a very remarkable wet September”), she would walk in a damp garden to get strength for the journey of eighteen miles from Doncaster to Sheffield, to which place the company went on October 13. Her infant was born on the second of that month, so if the walks in the damp garden were taken between the second and the

eighteenth, then Mrs. Smith simply asked for disaster. Wilkinson begged her neither to go to Sheffield nor to act until she was quite strong, but she insisted upon taking the journey—and it meant driving in as cheap a way as possible, or walking—with the consequence that she had fixed lameness in her hip, which was likely to prove dangerous. Even that did not keep her from the boards; act she would and act she did, limping and hobbling over the stage rather than let Dorothy appear, and in no way prevented by the manager's assurance that, as Jordan was at hand, there was no need for her attendance. The result of this headstrong act was a relapse and an enforced rest until December 18. As Dorothy took her "rest" from November 2 until late in December, Wilkinson was left lamenting two of his chief characters.

She spent this retirement in Hull, and her absence from the stage gave plenty of opportunity for malicious gossip, deliberate efforts being made there to destroy her reputation—a proof of her merit, else such indefatigable pains to injure and depress had not been taken. Thus when she appeared on the Hull stage in the part of Callista on December 26, 1782, though the house was good, her reception was cool, and, as all her life she was more than ordinarily affected by the attitude of her audiences, her performance was languid and spiritless. In the succeeding song, "The Greenwood Laddie," she was hissed.

Wilkinson puts this all down to the malevolence of what he calls the "Scandal Club," otherwise the jealous tongues of the actresses in his company, who represented to the ladies in the town that Mrs. Jordan was too improper a person to receive their support.

It was not long, however, before Dorothy's merits overcame prejudice, and slander was mute.

At Sheffield, in 1783, theatrical affairs were very low in public estimation, the takings one night being only £6 9s., though Dorothy's benefit gained £57. Six pounds nine shillings is bad enough, but it is on record that on one occasion when Garrick and Mrs. Cibber were acting at Drury Lane the evening's cash receipts amounted only to £3 15s. 6d. The Scandal Club was in great strength in Sheffield, headed by Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Ward, a new acquisition whose husband was in the band. The latter was very proud of herself in small clothes, and resented the fact that Mrs. Jordan had all the parts in which the debonair young man was played by a woman. Indeed, her resentment amounted to hatred, and she fanned Mrs. Smith's jealousy to an active state. These two women soon infected the others, and an organized attempt was made to render Dorothy's play bad by small persecutions, the favourite scheme being for several of them to sit in a group at the stage door, or the wings, and do everything in their power to disconcert her when going through her part. Wilkinson frustrated this by having all the doors which were not needed padlocked each night, and the knowledge that the manager was aware of what was going on acted as a deterrent.

Dorothy was a clever girl though, and not an actress for nothing, and she managed to secure retribution for her rivals in their loss of popularity. She would go on the stage with an air of the deepest distress, her eyes red and tears trickling, her tongue tied in the effort to prevent sobbing. At this sad sight the audience would ask what could possibly be the matter?

was she ill or injured? and then the whisper would circulate as to the unkindness of her sister actresses. Mrs. Smith never could conquer her hatred, and favours received from her rival only made her more bitter. When that winter she and her husband had a benefit, Dorothy, with fine magnanimity, offered her services and drew a great house, thus contributing largely to the sum pocketed by the Smiths, and the lady thanked her by grumbling; as Wilkinson says, "Jordan was the fly in the ointment, and still Mrs. Smith was not happy."

There were some incidents in her life which Dorothy Bland never forgot, among them being naturally the horror and distress brought upon her by the tyrant Daly, and the struggles of her early years on the stage. Her memory of the first filled her mind with tender feelings for women in the same plight, and after the birth of her daughter she kept by her several complete sets of linen necessary to a lying-in, which she lent out to poor women. When in after years she had more money to spend she increased the number of these bundles, and round Richmond and Drury Lane was often blessed by women who knew not where to secure necessities in their extremity.

For struggling actresses she always felt a generous sympathy and often showed it actively. Thus a girl of fifteen named Wilkinson applied to Tate (who was no relation) for work. Fifteen seems an absurd age to think of being self-supporting, but this girl had several years earlier, with other children, including the future Mrs. Kemble, little Romanzini, who was the future Mrs. George Bland, and others, acted at the circus in London in a piece by old Dibdin called

The Boarding School, or Breaking Up, a performance which was so successful that the patent proprietors interfered, and the children narrowly escaped gaol.

Wilkinson had no part for the young actress and could offer little hope of one, but to relieve her immediate needs he promised her a benefit performance on the last day of the year. She was quite unknown to the company, and there was little reason why any members should take trouble over her; but Dorothy, thinking pitifully of her own hard struggle, acted as Lionel to her Clarissa, and thus earned for herself the lasting friendship of the girl who, as Mrs. Mountain, was later well known on the London boards. Mrs. Smith kept her jealousy of Dorothy alive, and as in her benefit during the winter of 1783 she was not only not grateful but even spiteful, so in the winter of 1784 she followed the same tactics: for that benefit a new play, *Fontainebleau*, was acted, and though Mrs. Smith was given the part most suited to her, she was so annoyed that she could not have that allotted to her rival that she quarrelled violently with Wilkinson, and swore she would spoil the character every time she played it. This she proceeded to do, forgetting that while she was glorying in vexing the manager she was also losing her reputation as an actress.

During the winter season, however, of 1784-5 Dorothy lost some of her charm. She was ill and in poor spirits. Wilkinson, who was a kind-hearted man, though he had grown cynical in a good-natured way through his constant study of the actor-character, could not be sure whether she was really ill or only affected to be so. It is a curious fact that though Dorothy was always praised for her spontaneity and her natural

acting, she was all through her life to be suspected of acting when illness kept her off the stage. She was not a strong woman, but any indisposition on her part was generally the signal for some cry equivalent to the word malingering.

It has generally been said that Dorothy entirely supported her family of five persons while in York, but this was not so; for if Hester did not start acting as soon as she got to Yorkshire, it was not long before she began. On July 16, 1793, she made her first appearance on the Leeds stage, as Miss Francis, with a song, and she gradually progressed until two years later she was acting more constantly than Dorothy, and in important parts—Polly in *A Beggar on Horseback*, Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, etc. George also, as Master Francis, filled up gaps, such as a printer's devil, a messenger, an archer, and occasionally sang duets on the stage with Dorothy. It is, however, very possible that he got little or nothing for his juvenile performances.

All through these years George Inchbald, stepson to Mrs. Inchbald, was a member of the company, and there was the beginning of a romance between him and Dorothy. One gossip records that he loved her, but that circumstances were too desperate and her pride was too great for her to accept him, but the weight of evidence lies on the side of a strong emotion on the part of the lady which won a condescending but weak reciprocation from the gentleman. Dorothy's waywardness, her recurring depression and fitful humour at this time point rather to a trouble of the heart and mind than to disease of the body, to unhappiness rather than to unhealthiness. George, however, was a pru-

dent man, too prudent to catch opportunity at its call—too prudent, in fact, ever to achieve success. “The humble Nell of the York stage” was too humble to draw the magic declaration from him, and perhaps her unhappiness was too great for her to rise above it. So Dorothy gained the reputation that winter of being careless and inattentive to her parts, and the irritation of the audience culminated in March 1785 when a benefit performance was given of *Cymbeline*, followed by *The Poor Soldier*, and she was billed to sing a song at the end of the third act of the tragedy and to play in the farce. She said she was not well, and she evidently intended to lighten the evening’s work by cutting out the song in *Cymbeline*; but the audience wanted the song, they refused to do without it; they demanded the song or nothing—with their vengeance to follow.

Wilkinson unsuccessfully used all his art to make his actress sing, but, as he said, “no persuasion would do. Those who know Mrs. Jordan must know, without the least offence, she is very obstinate, she may be led but will not be driven on the stage or off, unless she is in the humour.”

The audience were even more obstinate than she; they reasoned that if she were really ill she would have stayed at home and given up her part in the farce; and if she were well enough to play and *sing* in the farce, she could also sing a song in the earlier piece. Of course she had to give way, for she had no wish to create a riot, so at last she staggered on to the stage, looking frightfully pale and already dressed as the poor soldier. Telling the audience she was ill, she promptly fainted against the background. The sce-

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ticism in front was, however, proof even against this, and when she was recovered sufficiently she was obliged to sing—

“In the prattling years of youth,” etc.

In giving his personal recollections of Mrs. Jordan during these three years Tate Wilkinson is very apologetic—humorously so, for he published his *Wandering Patentee* just ten years later, when she was at the height of her fame, and he might well have thought that he was telling things she might prefer to have kept hidden. At one point he says—

“Mrs. Jordan has more sense than to suppose, in relating these transactions, I mean any more than to make her laugh as well as any other reader; her not being so affluent at the time I am making mention reflects not the least disgrace, as she never can shine more in her days of prosperity than in her days of affliction.”

But he had practically quarrelled with her in 1791, four years before the book came out. As he says in another part of it, “I have ever entertained a regard for Mrs. Jordan, but speaking the truth, I trust, will little wrong her; we have often been very strong friends, and as often at whimsical jarrings. It is not only in 1782 I shall have the honour of introducing her, but occasionally, and will extend to 1790, and then I believe I made my rough bow, and the lady not any courtesy; and it is probable that we shall never meet again.”

They never did meet again, I believe, though Wilkinson did not die until 1803.

In the summer of 1785 the great chance came for

Dorothy; for Gentleman Smith had never forgotten the girl he had first seen acting in York three years before, and whom he had made a point of watching every race week in that town since.

Mrs. Siddons was then the one star of Drury Lane, “the great Siddonian Queen,” as one of her admirers called her, and there seems to have been no one to act as understudy to her; so Smith suggested that Mrs. Jordan should be engaged to play second to their incomparable actress, at four pounds a week.

At that time Dorothy had not seen Mrs. Siddons, but she was ready to go to London on almost any terms, for she had now been working three years in Yorkshire for a little wage, and she found that in London her salary could be more than doubled, so the arrangement was made that she should begin her assault of London in the autumn of 1785. As to her work there she may from the first have made some mental reservations, for the desire of her heart was to play second to no one, not even to Siddons.

There was a certain play written by Wycherley known as *The Country Wife*, which in its immorality and wit well represented the somewhat free days of its original production. To meet the demand for constant change and variety, this old play had been revived by Garrick, who, seeing its dramatic possibilities, changed it sufficiently to make its presentation possible in an age which seemed quite as pure after the licence of the Restoration period as that age itself seems impure to the increased delicacy of our own time.

The great David, after his pruning exertions, renamed it *The Country Girl*, and brought it up to the

level of his usual audience—not a particularly high level, for, despite the Shakespearean vogue, rape and adultery were the stock subjects of much of the popular drama of the time. Oxberry says that Francis Bland was responsible for a re-Revival of this play, and that Grace acted in it. This may have been, but it again had fallen out of use when, in 1785, an actress named Mrs. Brown, belonging to the Norwich company, took it to York in April, and Dolly watched its performance critically. She saw greater possibilities in it than Mrs. Brown had brought out, and determined to make the play her own. Though she had acted since her first days in Dublin in *The Romp*, she had never yet identified herself with farcical comedy, but was considered that somewhat colourless person, a good all-round actress, with especial talent for sentiment. Now *The Country Girl* woke her from her lethargy, and she began to lay plans for her future in London.

It was said that Mrs. Brown taught Dorothy Jordan how to play the part, a statement upon which Wilkinson throws his light scorn : “I do not think Mrs. Brown had a wish to give any instructions, nor the other lady the least inclination to receive them, had they been offered; each held the abilities of the other in the highest contempt, and there was no love lost between them.”

It is evident from all accounts that Dorothy’s acting was of a poor quality this summer, for Mr. Yates, the husband of the actress, seeing her in Yorkshire, gave his opinion that Mrs. Jordan was a piece of theatrical mediocrity, while he thought Miss Wilkinson, who had succeeded in getting a position with the company, both

pleasing and promising, and Mrs. Brown as the height of excellence. Mrs. Siddons, too, who was touring there in August, and doubtless knew that this young woman was to be her “second,” gave it as her opinion that Mrs. Jordan had better remain where she was and not attempt the London boards. It is curious to note that this same advice was given to Mrs. Siddons herself in her early days by William Woodfall, the dramatic critic, for he thought her too weak for the large London theatres, and recommended her to keep to small houses where she could be heard.

The struggle for life was so bitter, and the mental horizon of the players so limited that their quarrels—and there were many—seem often to have verged upon farce; and this year the introduction of a new actress into Wilkinson’s company, a Mrs. Robinson, later known as Mrs. Taylor, gave a delicious example of the effects of jealousy. It was at Leeds that Wilkinson engaged her, recording that “her figure in small-clothes was neat to perfection,” and probably by his favourable impression of her he at once set the heart of a loving mother beating with anger. For Mrs. Bland still thought her daughter possessed of the very highest attributes of her art, and she despised any one who dared to strut in the characters that she regarded as sacred to Dorothy. As a new actress or any special occasion would draw the unoccupied members of the company to show their curiosity by hanging round the doors which opened on to the stage, Mrs. Bland one night took a chair, and sitting where she could see everything well, watched Mrs. Robinson perform. It was a sight which saddened her almost to distraction, and when the manager came her way she caught

him by the coat, and, holding her apron over her eyes, demanded earnestly that he would tell her, as an act of kindness, when that fright should have done acting and speaking, for *it* was so horrid that she could not bear to look at *it*.

Mrs. Robinson was just as flattering to Dorothy; when in conversation with Wilkinson one evening she wondered how he could say that Mrs. Jordan had so much merit; for her own part she could not discover that she had any, or, if any, only a small share, and that mediocre. "I flatter myself that I have some judgment, and I venture to say that when you lose your *great treasure* in the autumn, and *it* goes to London, *it* will be glad to come back if you will accept *it*."

That Mrs. Robinson had some reason for her opinion the public testified when, at Dorothy's benefit, which occurred on July 25, it refused to attend, the house holding but a sprinkling of people to see her act Imogen in *Cymbeline*, and Rachel in *The Fair American*.

With nonchalant weariness Dorothy trod the York boards for the last time early in September, and made her last appearance in Yorkshire as a member of Wilkinson's company at Wakefield on the ninth of that month in *The Poor Soldier*. It was with no great hope that she set off for London, for life and acting had staled for her; she was sure of nothing, not even of herself, and no presentiment of what was to come shed any glow over her mind, though her new salary of four pounds a week must have been very comforting in anticipation.

CHAPTER V

DOROTHY AND THE BRITISH PUBLIC

"Her laughter is the happiest and most natural thing on the stage ; if she is to laugh in the middle of a speech, it does not separate itself so abruptly from her words as with most of our performers. . . . Her laughter intermingles itself with her words as fresh ideas afford her fresh merriment, she does not so much indulge as she seems unable to help it ; it increases, it lessens, with her fancy, and when you expect it no longer according to the usual habits of the stage, it sparkles forth at little intervals as recollection revives it, like flame from half-smothered embers. This is the laughter of the feelings, and it is the predominance of heart in all she says and does that renders her the most delightful actress in the *Violante* of *The Wonder*, the *Clara* of *Matrimony*, and in twenty other characters."--LEIGH HUNT.

In September 1785 the Blands went to London, the party consisting of Mrs. Bland, Hester, Dorothy and the little Frances, daughter of Daly. There is no mention of a brother at this time, the report being that he had been sent to school and college by his father's relatives. This, however, was a confusion with Mrs. Williams and Nathaniel, for George was with his sister all the time they were in Yorkshire, though she may have sent him to school later. Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, seems to have been the first London home of the family.

At this time Mrs. Siddons was the one great actress at Drury Lane, Miss Farren being the only other of note, and she played the dainty fine lady of the conventional type to perfection ; but there was no one to represent farcical comedy, and, indeed, farcical comedy was not in favour. Mrs. Siddons had so accustomed the public to the representations of death

and tragic endings that people went to the theatre to cry, to shudder and often to faint. So often was the last-named luxury indulged in, and so complimentary was it thought to be to the chief actress, that later public mockery was made of it in bogus advertisements, as when Mrs. Elizabeth Screech announced that she was well known at Drury Lane Theatre, having had the honour of fainting for a great tragic actress there these ten years past, where she flatters herself she has given ample satisfaction, etc., etc.

Such a theatre was just the right place for Dorothy Bland, for though she could not honestly desire to understudy Mrs. Siddons, she yet had the capacity to lighten the gloom and educate the theatre-loving London to a greater variety of taste. She was announced in the papers first as a new performer, as thus from the *Morning Post*: "Mr. Lawrence and two young female performers were to have come out in *Philaster*, but they will now make their entries separately." This was corrected by: "The lady who is to make her first appearance in the revived *Philaster* is not, as has been said, a dramatic novice, but one initiated in every mystery of the scene. Her name is Jordan."

But Dorothy successfully claimed the right to choose the play in which she should first appear, and flew in the face of usage by demanding to make her debut as Peggy in *The Country Girl*. Eventually Tom King, the nominal manager, and Sheridan, the lessee-manager, agreed, and it was whispered among theatrical circles that they decided to run the risk of introducing her in farcical comedy because their great star was too high fixed for them. Her haughtiness



DOROTHY JORDAN AS PEGGY IN *THE COUNTRY GIRL*

AFTER ROMNEY, ENGRAVED BY J. OGBORNE, 1786

THE MOUNT
MAGNOLIA

offended all, and those with whom she acted were in the humiliating position of being made to feel it an honour to act with her. It may have been manner only, but Mrs. Siddons seemed never to have been able to forget either her talent or her virtue. Thus proprietor, managers, actors all had a score up against her, and felt that the only method of holding their own was to make an attack from within. So on Gentleman Smith's recommendation Dorothy was allowed innocently to take the position of chief attacker.

The chosen night was October 18, 1785, a day of mingled hopes and fears for the young actress, followed by deadly nervousness, but once on the stage she became totally unconscious of all but the part she had to play.

The house was not good—for fashionable people would not go to see an unknown actress—and the criticisms of the following morning were varied, a few bad, but mostly good. "Mrs. Jordan was vulgar," said one, she might do as "Filch in *The Beggars' Opera*," said Harris of Covent Garden, to which an enthusiast retorted, "Certainly, for she filches our hearts away."

Henry Tremamondo, better known as Henry Angelo, was present that evening, and says of it in his *Reminiscences*: "The first night of Mrs. Jordan's appearance at Drury Lane, as Peggy in *The Country Girl*, I was in the balcony box, over the stage, in company with Parson Bate and Duffer Vaughan, . . . at the time they were so delighted with her debut, that they both decided on her future excellence, particularly Mr. Bate, whose critique the next morn-

ing, in the *Morning Herald*, speaking of her perfections, 'true to nature,' foretold her future abilities."

One paragraph of Mr. Bate's criticism gives some idea of Dorothy's appearance: "She is universally allowed to possess a figure, small perhaps, but neat and elegant, as was remarkably conspicuous when she was dressed as a boy in the third act. Her face, if not beautiful, is said by some to be pretty and by some pleasing, intelligent or impressive. Her voice, if not peculiarly sweet, is not harsh, if not strong, is clear and equal to the extent of the theatre. She has much activeness, and gave every point of the dialogue with the most comic effect, and improved to the uttermost all the ludicrous situations with which *The Country Girl* abounds. From such premises there is and can be but one conclusion, that she is a most valuable acquisition to the public stock of innocent entertainment."

It was six nights before Dorothy again acted, for Mrs. Siddons expecting the birth of a child in mid-winter, was taking every night that she could at the theatre so as to fulfil her contract and yet have two or three months' rest. But each time Dolly played the audience was larger, and before the winter was over there was a line of carriages stretching through the streets around Drury Lane such as had been regarded as a tribute solely to the powers of Mrs. Siddons. As soon as her success was assured pæans of praise were heard: "Perhaps no debut, except that of young Roscius, has excited so great a sensation in the dramatic world," said a writer in the *Dramatic Magazine*, well after the event; and others did the same, giving accounts which, though quite true of the real result,

were not true of the first night. Mrs. Inchbald, who had met Dorothy again and again, and later wrote one or two plays for her, said that "She came to town with no report in her favour to elevate her above a very moderate salary or to attract more than a very moderate house. But she displayed such consummate art, with such bewitching good nature, such excellent acting and such innocent simplicity, that her auditors were boundless in their plaudits and so warm in their praises when they left the theatre, that their friends at home would not give credit to their eulogies." She went on to say that Dorothy's pronunciation was imperfect and that most of her words were pronounced with a kind of provincial dialect, a remark which annoyed Boaden very much, and he retorted in his *Life* that Mrs. Jordan was guided by the principle of giving to certain words a fullness and comic richness, which rendered them most truly representative of the ideas they stood for; "it was expressing all the juice from the grape of the laughing vine. To instance once for all: she knew the importance attached to *a best gown*. Let the reader recollect the full volume of sound which she threw into those words, and he will understand me. It was not provincial dialect, it was *humorous delivery*, and as a charm only inferior to her laugh."

To this may be added what Galt said in his refutation of the idea that Mrs. Brown *taught* Dorothy to act in this piece. "The elastic step, the artless action, the sincere laugh, and, if the expression can be used, the juicy tones of her clear and melodious voice, so peculiar to Mrs. Jordan, could never have been attained by studying any other. The manner in which

she used to pronounce the single word 'Ecod!' was as if she had taken a mouthful of some ripe and delicious peach."

This curious simile of luscious fruit was indulged in by Hazlitt when he criticized King's acting in later life, which he said left "a taste in the palate sharp and sweet like a peach; with an old, hard, rough, withered face, like a John-apple, puckered up into a thousand wrinkles, with shrewd hints and tart replies."

As Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres were each anxiously trying to outdo the other, the former theatre introduced Miss Brunton in Dorothy's line, and for a short space there was discussion as to which of the two actresses was the better. Then near the end of January Mrs. Brown was brought up from Norwich by Harris to act *The Country Girl* before a London audience. But success did not attend his effort, for not only were the two actresses quite different, but their acting was quite different also, and Dorothy had the gorgeous quality of youth: the laughter, the innocence, the ingenuous air all seemed real; while Mrs. Brown was a matron "long past the season in which alone the hoyden can look natural and prove attractive."

The critics were constantly comparing Dorothy with Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive, and, indeed, since the retirement of the latter there had been no actress on the boards who could wring a hearty laugh from the audience.

It is noteworthy that on the 6th of December, two months after Dorothy's debut in London, Mrs. Clive died at Strawberry Hill, and Horace Walpole, who did not think that any one could equal her in her

particular style, put a memorial urn in her cottage garden, having inscribed upon it—

“This is Mirth’s consecrated ground.
Here lived the laughter-loving dame—
A matchless actress—Clive her name.
The comic muse with her retired
And shed a tear when she expired.”

To this Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcot), who was a devoted admirer of Dorothy Jordan, retorted—

“Know Comedy is hearty—all alive,
Truth and thy trumpet seem not to agree ;
The spritely lass no more expired with Clive,
Than Dame Humility will do with thee.”

To sum up the results of Mrs. Jordan’s early appearance in London, both critics and actors were unanimous in declaring her a force on the boards. Bannister was enthusiastic, Sheridan was joyful, and King, though no admirer of her style, foresaw new life and new prosperity for the theatre which he had served so long; its affairs were in such a condition that any one who could bring gold to its coffers was heartily welcomed by the harried sub-manager. Sheridan was the real despot, but he had far too many arduous occupations not to need some one to do the work and receive the kicks of fortune for him.

As for Dorothy herself she started with £4 a week, and in a few days was promised £8. Poverty had not blinded her to her own merit, and when she saw how thoroughly she had dragged Drury Lane out of its sluggish despondency she asked a further rise, and after some discussion another £4 a week was added to her receipts. Physical strength and hope had returned, she seemed to be on the top of the wave, and enjoyed the position. It is not necessary or interesting to go through a list of the parts she played, except

where they did something more than fill the theatre or put money in her pocket. But one of the pieces which added to her fame this winter was *The Trip to Scarborough*, which was an expurgated edition of Sir John Vanburgh's *Relapse*, also prepared by Sheridan.

This play was hardly as refined as might be wished, one prominent character being Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, whose name alone implies grossness. Mrs. Jordan took the part of his daughter, the joyous, rustic Miss Hoyden, showing in all its perfection the kind of young lady who has left the nursery without being old enough to appear in the drawing-room, who felt the sentiments of a woman while still retaining the petulance and waywardness of a child. Her dress in this character was described by Mrs. Tickell—sister to Mr. Sheridan—as¹ “A blue ground with red flowers upon it, in the shape of a slip, but evidently ill made on purpose and too scanty by a breadth or two. Her bib or apron had scarcely a pin, a pair of long gauze ruffles, the under part before, and continually slipping below her elbows, with a very vulgar cap all on one side.”

In the character of Miss Hoyden Dorothy Jordan won fame, and kept it. Yet in this part she never quite rivalled herself in that other popular character of Miss Tomboy in *The Romp*, the farce in which she acted in Dublin and which Kitty Clive had so identified with her own name. It was in this character that Romney painted his beautiful picture of her, and it was declared that this part alone stamped her as an actress as great in her own way as Mrs. Siddons was in hers.

A curious result of Dorothy's first autumn in town was that the tragedy queen was touched to the heart

¹ *Sheridan*, by Walter Sichel.

by the girl's success, and at the end of October it was announced that she intended to appear in comedy, and "to render Thalia as fashionable as Melpomene." This was when Dorothy had *acted* only three times, and Mrs. Siddons's autocratic mind here showed itself; it was as though she said: "An unimportant new person has come here to make the world laugh, so I will show how it *should* be done." Mrs. Siddons could brook no rival near her throne, but—alas, for her pride—as one of her daughters was born at the end of December she had to leave Dorothy supreme at Drury Lane. When she returned in February she found little pleasure awaiting her, for tragedy at Drury Lane had been worn down by endless repetition, and the public, delighted with its new sensation, reserved its enjoyment and its money for the comedy which Jordan offered them. That she might attract by novelty, Mrs. Siddons revived the somewhat feeble tragedy of *Percy*, and in *The Merchant of Venice* played her original trial part of Portia.

Dorothy was acting so constantly that *The Public Advertiser* remarked: "That charming, endearing, beautiful, little, accomplished actress, Mrs. Jordan, makes us suffer more than we can describe, as we are always desirous to see her, and yet cannot help wishing her a rest from her fatigues. It is said that an application will be made to Parliament for leave of absence for a fortnight." She had two benefits in the spring, at one of which she played the *Irish Widow*, such an audience being collected as had been very seldom seen. Her triumph was increased by the fact that the members of Brooks's Club presented her with a purse containing £300. Another character which was very popular was her Hypolita in *She Would*

and She Would Not, of which she said in 1814 when some one told her of the pleasure experienced in seeing her in it: "Aye, that was one of the parts on which I used to pique myself."

Her labours had been so great that on May 25 the management gave her the last fortnight of the season as a holiday, and she immediately went for a few nights to Manchester, then to Liverpool and Birmingham; after which she took Leeds on her way to Edinburgh, where she appeared on July 17.

Her success had been equal to her energy, it had even been great enough for George Inchbald, who came up to London that spring, filled with the warmest protestations of love, and thinking to find again the Dorothy Jordan he had deliberately let out of his reach. On arriving at her house he sent up his card, and was admitted only to learn that the past was past and could never be recalled, or, as one chronicler puts it: "That he was always welcome to a knife and fork, but that nothing farther could thereafter be thought of seriously." There is no real record that this first season in London drew to Dorothy's side any admirer more devoted than the general flock, yet there is at least the suspicion that she may have fallen to the level of the parts she reproduced, and have taken a lover, whose name was Bettesworth.

Posting from Birmingham to Scotland she could not resist the delight of going back to old haunts to flaunt her new importance before that varied company in which she had suffered so many pinpricks from jealous comrades.

Mrs. Robbins, the graceful and neat, was still there, and mischievous fate must have been in her most ironic mood when she allowed Dorothy's arrival

at Leeds on her way to Edinburgh to coincide with the benefit of the lady who had expressed so disdainful and pitying an opinion of the Jordan's powers. It was on the night of June 16, 1786, that Mrs. Robinson disported herself as Horatio in *The Roman Father* and Widow Brady in the farce of *The Irish Widow*. The house was not good, indeed very inferior to that on her benefit the year before, when Mrs. Jordan was in the company. This was depressing enough in itself, but when, early in the evening, Mrs. Robinson heard a murmur in the audience, and looking for the cause saw Mrs. Jordan attended by her mother and sister in one of the boxes, she felt that fate had indeed dealt hardly with her. Dorothy carefully ensured the attention of the house by her prominence, for now was her triumph not only over the rival of last year, but over the audience which had turned away from her at the same time. Now she, whom every one had regarded as Mrs. Nobody, was Mrs. Somebody, and quite naturally she wanted to enjoy the fun that the old bitterness might be banished from her memory. Having well preened herself in the eyes of the cheering people—for her fame had spread “to the North Pole and excited offers of bewitching golden fire”—she condescended to go behind scenes that she might greet her old manager, friends and acquaintances and ask them how they all did, “and not without an additional grace of an alluring nod and smile, which had been purchased at the London market of fashion, during a whole winter’s absence of good luck, fortune and everything that was enviable.” Even the humorous and kindly Vkinson was not proof against the jealousy which Jordan's success had raised in the hearts of those of her old set, for the

last sentence is his. That Dorothy enjoyed this little triumph is doubtless, but that her only emotion on being back in the scenes among which she had spent over three years of her life, and among people from whom she had experienced much kindness—if some annoyance—should have been a condescending exhibition of her own self-importance was not possible to one of her ardent and generous temperament. Wilkinson could never resist writing for effect, and also he did in this case read too much of his own suspicions into her conduct.

His description of her effective but wordless interview with Mrs. Robinson on the stage is pure farce, and, however much exaggerated, makes too good a story not to be given in his own words. Mrs. Jordan went to an opening on the stage to watch the play, and stood in such fashion that she could be seen by the audience. “In short, by slow degrees she advanced so far on the stage, that at the fist-hold of her sister’s arm she was at the very edge of the wing on the stage part; this was during the small clothes scene in *The Irish Widow* in the last act of that farce. This enraged the Widow Robinson to a degree. . . . She, however, kept up her spirits to let the Jordan see how well she could act, and with a sneer not the gentlest darted a glance at the Jordan, insinuating, ‘Can you act like this?’ The other, with all the nonchalance of fashion, said a great deal without speaking even a word, for her gestures and pantomime actions were inimitable; and as she leant on her sister, she pointed at Widow Brady’s buckles, then at her figure, next with a shrug signifying that the whole was intolerable, and at last, after giving the torture in an elegant and truly significant manner, she gave her a

last look and turned away with the grandest contempt and hauteur. Now it may be asked why I did not prevail on Mrs. Jordan to quit so improper a situation for herself, and cruel to a degree, as Mrs. J.'s marks of disapprobation were of great consequence in the minds of many that year, though the effect might have been widely different the year before. But in answer, it is probable that my request would not have been complied with, for the manager she had looked up to was no longer the man of terror and command, but *then* looked down upon if he dared to assume authority; and another hidden reason might be the cause, had my desire of her quitting so conspicuous a situation been complied with, it might not have given me the ill-natured satisfaction I enjoyed, for Mrs. Robinson had quarrelled violently with me the day before, and as I love a little mischief—it is in my nature, and oh, Nature! Nature! who can stop thy course? I felt for Mrs. Robinson, yet at the same time I immoderately chuckled at the mischief I witnessed going forward. . . . Mrs. Robinson had foretold that Mrs. Jordan would be back with me before twelve months were gone and over, and so far her gift of double sight was verified (so were the witches' prophecies in *Macbeth*), but not as either Mrs. Robinson or Mr. Wilkinson expected, for instead of the suppliant she came *splash, splash, dish, dash*, to the Leeds play-house, and tassles dangling, etc. Oh, it is a charming thing to be a woman of quality! And in lieu of her asking me for an engagement, the case was so greatly altered, for I was obliged to solicit the lady who formerly solicited me, and it was no more than a comic adventure between us three, like a party of pleasure at a quadrille, where all should play and pay

alike. 'Ay, but,' says Mrs. Robinson, 'you have made me at this game pay more than my share.' Well, Mrs. Robinson, never mind it, I will pay two-thirds at our next meeting to clear the debt; I am a rich man in that respect, and will deal most cheerfully and liberally, and I hope this nonsense will be read by the two ladies, as I mean it whimsically and for us all three to laugh at.' In such an account, "whimsical," as it may have been, we get an impression of reality. Here are the real people, with no attempt on the writer's part either at whitewashing or at be-littling. Dorothy Jordan was no saint, yet some of her biographers have tried to glorify her into something other and less than she was, thus in *The Great Illegitimates* we are told that she went behind the scenes and, "with her accustomed sweetness of temper, renewed acquaintance with her former associates"! Mrs. Robinson must have prayed devoutly to be delivered from any further taste of such sweetness. She probably also prayed for revenge, and that prayer was heard.

That night Tate begged the actress who a year ago had been earning £1 11s. 6d. a week under his care to play one night for him. She was quite willing, but she dictated her own terms, which were half shares after £15 had been deducted for house expenses. This he instantly agreed to, not that he expected a great profit either for Mrs. Jordan or for himself; but that he thought it would do him good in the public estimation to show her again on his boards. Her acting was well known in a town where she had played for four consecutive summers, and her last benefit had been quite neglected, so that except for the kudos the genial manager only expected an ordinary night.

She played *The Country Girl*, which was new to

Leeds, and *The Romp*, which was known almost to weariness; but to Wilkinson's astonishment the house was overflowing before the curtains were drawn. Seven rows of the pit "were laid into the boxes to greet her return," which was rather hard on the pittites. "What is to be said for these things? Why, nothing, for it never was strange that the world should be whimsical."

At Edinburgh, where her brother George accompanied her, though Wilkinson does not mention him in Leeds, Dorothy found her uncle John in the part of treasurer to the Theatre Royal, a man then over sixty; and when she acted Peggy in *The Country Girl* her aunt took the part of Lucy and her cousin, John's eldest son, was Belville. Dolly, with her keen family instincts, must have enjoyed this unusual meeting with real relatives, and it is possible that the elder family were gratified by meeting and acting with one who was on the high road to success.

John Bland, the elder, having gone to Edinburgh in 1766 to visit some relatives, lent a large sum of money to Ross, the manager, and put £1600 in the theatre. Thus he had sufficient interest to remain in the town, and in 1772 he joined West Digges as co-lessee of the theatre. It was not a fortunate engagement, for the latter got into great difficulties, was thrown into prison, and escaped, owing his comrade £1300. The theatre was left in Bland's hands, and swallowed everything else that he had. So that at last he had to close it from sheer inability to keep it going; but when Jackson, the next proprietor, took it he became treasurer.

There are many stories of John Bland's absence of mind concerning the way in which he used to forget

what part he was acting. On one such occasion he told the audience that "he vowed to his God he could not say how this happened, for he could appeal to Nancy that he had repeated the part to her that morning as perfect as an angel." Once, when the audience was so small that it was decided to return the money, he came forward on the stage, saying—

"Ladies and gentlemen, as there is not a soul in this house worth playing to, this play will be repeated to-morrow."

I find that he, his wife, his eldest son and his son John were acting for years on the Edinburgh boards, and that they acted with Dorothy every time she went there until 1792, when John, the elder's name, seems to have been withdrawn. John Bland had the lovable qualities of his family and more than his share of general capacity, for he wrote a novel which was well reviewed, entitled *Frederick the Forsaken*, suggested perhaps by his own life, and he was also the author of the *Edinburgh Rosciad* as well as other publications. He died in 1808, and Carlisle says an annual subscription for his support was sent him from his family for some years previous to his death. So a moiety of the plenty which should have been his through life was grudgingly doled to him at the last to keep him from death.

Perhaps if he, "a brave, proud, generous, affable, friendly, honest, unthinking man,"¹ had had a touch of his father's hardness of character as the strengthening alloy to so much gold, his life would have been more successful.

In Edinburgh Dorothy had a great welcome, for

¹ *Hibernian Magazine*.

this was her first appearance in Scotland; but though the excitement over her acting was considerable, the newspapers gave her little notice, because Mrs. Siddons was there regarded as the only great woman actor, and the taste of the day had got well settled down to tragedy. It needed custom and usage to persuade the business-like Scot that Miss Tomboy and Dorothy's other characters were not over-frivolous.

But "Thalia," a name by which her admirers had already begun to ennable her, was well content with her reception, and on the 6th of August, when she played Mrs. Cowley's *Belle's Stratagem* for her benefit, she delivered an epilogue which she had written herself, one which, if somewhat lacking in metrical excellence, is graceful enough in sentiment to merit repetition.

"Presumption 'tis, in learning's seat,
For me the Muses to entreat;
Yet, bold as the attempt may be,
I'll mount the steed of poesy;
And as my *Pegasus* is small,
If stumbling, I've not far to fall.

Hear then, ye Nine! the boon I ask,
While (throwing off the comic mask)
With gratitude I here confess
How much you've heightened my success.

By sealing thus my sentence now,
You've heaped new laurels on my brow;
Nor is the Northern sprig less green,
Than that which in the South was seen;
For though your *sun* may colder be,
Your hearts I've found as warm for me.

One wreath I only gained before,
But your kind candour gives me more;
And, like your union, both combine
To make the garland brighter shine.

"Tis true such planets¹ sparkled here
As make me tremble to appear;—

¹ An allusion to Mrs. Siddons.

A twinkling star, just come in sight,
Which, towards the pole, would give no light.

Melpomene has made such work,
Reigning despotic like the Turk ;
I feared Thalia had no chance
Her laughing standard to advance ;
But yet her youngest ensign, I
Took courage, was resolved to try,
And stand the hazard of the die.

Since then the venturous game I've tried,
With Nature only for my guide ;
The bets if fairly won I'll take
Nor wish to make it my last stake."

From Edinburgh she went to Glasgow, and there the audiences were so delighted that they presented her with a gold medal, bearing an inscription on one side with the Glasgow arms, a tree, and a verse on the other side with a feather above it. The first ran—

"TO MRS. JORDAN.

"MADAM,—Accept this trifle from the Glasgow audience, who are as great admirers of genius as the critics of Edinburgh."

The verse was as follows—

"Bays from our tree you could not gather,
No branch of it deserves that name ;
So take it all, call it a feather,
And place it in your cap of fame."

On her return journey in September she played at Hull and Wakefield, and at the latter place experienced a shock, for the Wakefield people were angry with Tate Wilkinson because he had brought Mrs. Siddons there for only one night and then taken her for a week to Leeds; therefore they turned their backs upon his theatre and upon Dorothy. Wilkinson himself explains the incident thus: "Melpomene's bowl and dagger having left such an awful gloom, that even Thalia could not laugh, or, if she did, it was very mortifying, as it was to herself almost without company or any throng of visitors."

CHAPTER VI

RIVALRY AND LOVE

“CUPID to HYMEN.

Thou bane to my empire, thou spring o’ contest,
Thou source of all discord, thou period to rest ;
Instruct me what wretches in bondage can see,
That the aim of their life is still pointed to thee.

“HYMEN to CUPID.

Instruct me, thou little impudent god,
From whence all thy subjects have taken the mode
To grow fond of a change, to whatever it be,
And I’ll tell thee why those would be bound who are free.

VANBRUGH, *The Relapse*.

In September 1786, Dorothy made a great impression upon the public as Matilda in the curious play of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, curious because General Burgoyne, who adapted it from the French play of *Sedane*, made Matilda and Blondel one and the same person, thus giving greater scope to Dorothy, for whom he designed that part. She threw herself enthusiastically into this character, for the disguised and sorrowful wife wandering through Europe to look for the lost husband, appealed to her love of sentiment. “Another character wherein I took infinite delight was Matilda, in *Richard Cœur de Lion*, because it strongly savoured of the pathetic,” she said thirty years later, when talking with Helen Maria Williams, now forgotten, but then well known for her writings on Paris and the Revolution. This new play was a favourite for years, but it had to share the boards with tragedy, and in October Mrs. Siddons made a sensation in the

play of *Cleone*, by Dodsley. In this she so affected the ladies among the audience that on the second night the boxes were nearly empty. The critics attributed this to the frivolous atmosphere which had come over the stage with the advent of Mrs. Jordan, one adding that "the refined feelings of the present time affect to revolt at tragedies where insipidity does not prevail." Boaden, however, in more downright fashion says that it was truly distressing to see Mrs. Siddons in the agonies of *Cleone*—a mother raving over her murdered child—only a little month before her own confinement. "If there be anything whatever in stage exertion, Cleone was quite enough, one would think, to destroy her."

From the very first, the sense of rivalry was keen between Dorothy and the great Siddons, and this became to our actress one of the most disturbing influences in these years when she was achieving and the latter had won fame. In temperament and character they were as far as the poles apart, and Mrs. Siddons did nothing to hide the scorn she felt for her rival, while Dorothy chafed always under the sense of inferiority with which Mrs. Siddons burdened her. This rivalry led both to take characters which were most unsuited to them, though Dorothy always was troubled with a desire to act sentimental parts. In a conversation with Miss Williams, she said—

"During the very zenith of my career in the walk of comedy, I still had a strong hankering after the sentimental; I was always gratified in the extreme when it fell to my lot to sustain characters of such a cast. For instance, when I personified Little Pickle in *The Spoiled Child*, in the particular scene where I

sang 'Since then I'm doomed,' I uniformly called up everything I could, expressive of the pathetic, as well in countenance as voice and manner, on which occasions nothing was so truly gratifying to my feelings as the applause which followed; mind, I do not merely allude to the air, but the verbal delivery of my part, which never failed in producing its effect upon my auditors."

She also had a wish to shine in polite comedy, in spite of the fact that her real strength lay in depicting simple, arch, buoyant girls, or spirited, loving women; and in spite of that other fact that she thoroughly enjoyed acting handsome hoydens. Mrs. Siddons, on the contrary, could only show the height of her great powers in tragedy. These two were, in truth, the complement of each other in the dramatic world, needing only such graceful if artificial actresses as Miss Farren to play the high-born dame in comedy to complete the circle. But this they never seemed to realize, and there were two historic trials of strength between them. The one was when Dorothy took the part of Imogen in *Cymbeline*. She had tried it in Yorkshire, attaining no great success. In London she did little better, for she lacked that delicate dignity which Imogen needs in some of her scenes. Yet the ordinary public, willing by this time to applaud anything she did, were delighted. Mrs. Siddons must have revelled in the real failure of Dorothy on this occasion, and to prove to every one that it was a failure, she announced for her benefit in the spring of 1787, that she would take the part of Imogen. Thomas Campbell, her admiring biographer, declared that he believed that she only did it to prove that she could

beat Mrs. Jordan ; and he concluded his account of the evening by recording that by acting Imogen only once, our actress put a stop to Mrs. Jordan's competition with her on the graver stage. Imogen, having to repulse Cloten, and to rebuke Iachimo, requires not only sweetness, but dignity of demeanour. Of the latter princely quality, the lovely and romping Mrs. Jordan had not a particle.

The poet was too intent on the play and the actress to note that which the less concentrated mind thought of importance. For Mrs. Siddons's sense of delicacy was so great that her sense of propriety suffered. She was filled with horror at the idea of dressing as a boy. So she wrote to Hamilton, the artist, asking him if he would be so good as to make her a sketch of a boy's dress to conceal the figure as much as possible. And she appeared in a nondescript apparel which excited mirth among the laughter-loving part of her audience. Boaden described the incident rather well when he said : "A taste, which I will neither censure nor examine on the present occasion, calls upon females who assume the male habit for a more complete display of the figure than suits the decorum of a delicate mind. Mrs. Siddons assumed as little of the man as possible, so that the most powerful scenes were those in the dress of her sex."

But though Mrs. Siddons came out victor in this trial, it was Mrs. Jordan to whom the crown was given, when they competed as Rosalind in *As You Like it*. The former had played this part in a benefit some time earlier, but she had not the qualities of roguishness and lightness it required, and she was too squeamish to take the manly dress in a manly spirit. For that

part she had other garments designed for her, which, also, were suitable neither for man nor woman, and so drew much ridicule upon her stately head, a ridicule which Genest trenchantly said was very deserved; "she had it at her option to act Rosalind or not to act Rosalind—but, determined to act the part, she should have dressed properly." Campbell mournfully and grudgingly admitted that if her impersonation was not entirely a failure she had equally fallen short of triumph. "Here, I believe, in the whole of her professional career, Mrs. Siddons found a rival, who beat her out of a single character. But those who best remember Mrs. Jordan will be the least surprised at her defeating her great contemporary in this one instance. Mrs. Jordan was, perhaps, a little too much of the romp in some touches of the part; but altogether she had the *naïveté* of it to such a degree that Shakespeare himself, if he had been a living spectator, would have gone behind the scenes to have saluted her for her success in it."

While the conclusion of his paragraph was the highest praise Dorothy Jordan could have received, the first sentence was scarcely fair to her, for she played many parts in which Mrs. Siddons would have been impossible.

Among the characters which added to Dorothy's popularity were Miss Prue, in *Love for Love*; Juletta to Kemble's Pedro in *The Pilgrim*, by Fletcher, and Roxalana in *The Sultan*. In the last, Barrymore took the part of the Grand Turk, and he found Roxalana so fascinating that he could not always properly sustain the character of the stern Bashaw. On quitting the boards one night he ran into the Green Room, threw

himself on a sofa, and after indulging in a laugh that was nearly suffocating, turned to Mrs. Jordan, saying, "By the Holy Prophet, madam, if you continue to play after this fashion you will despatch me in an agony of laughter to the seventh heaven, there to enjoy my houris everlastingly."

Mrs. Jordan was very busy that autumn and in the early part of 1787, after which her name appears less frequently in the lists. This does not mean that she was always absent unless her presence was reported, but she really did not act so often, and for this there were several causes.

There were the Kembles always to be considered, and Dorothy's activity in the winter is to be explained by the fact that Mrs. Siddons was again absent from the theatre, for family reasons. When she was back at work there was naturally less scope for her rival's powers.

During this first year in London there is silence about Dorothy's private life. She lived in Henrietta Street with her family, but the newspapers were concerned solely with her theatrical triumphs. A great deal has been said about her absolute integrity, and her freedom from the sins of her sister actresses, though one biographer, shocked at her wifely connection with the Duke of Clarence, called her a degraded woman, who had brought disgrace upon an honourable profession. This was pure nonsense, for the general life of an actress, then, was far from being as respectable as Dorothy's, and when one was high-minded like Mrs. Siddons, it was regarded as a miracle. Society had pronounced the actress a pariah, and gave her no temptation to be a saint.

In December 1786 a sketch of Mrs. Jordan appeared in *The Town and Country Magazine*, one paragraph of which began with the words: "Mrs. Jordan has always been prudent in her amours. Her present favourite is not the choice of love." Then comes a description of the man who, having great influence at the theatre, had convinced her that it was to her advantage to accept his suit. This proves one thing and infers another; the proven thing being that before that date Dorothy was known to be the mistress of Richard Ford. But the first words hint that there had been some one else who had also appealed to her prudence. If such an inference may be drawn, this some one else was a man of property named Bettesworth, for, twenty years after, one of her daughters was stated to be the child of an old gentleman named Bettesworth, who had left her money on the condition that she took his name. This, however, comes later.

Much has been written about the statement that Dorothy only yielded to Ford on the solemn promise that he would make her his wife. Boaden, in his desire to please the Duke of Clarence, makes scarcely any mention of the Ford connection, which, however, lasted for five years, and no light is thrown by him on the subject. *The Great Illegitimates*, however, asserts it was accompanied by "a solemn promise of marriage, which the gentleman said must be deferred, under the dread of giving offence to his father, on whom he was dependent; when, confiding in the honour and promises of her suitor, Mrs. Jordan at length consented to place herself under his protection."

If this was so, it was not unlikely that Dorothy was willing to give up a rich, but married lover, for a

young and impecunious man; for her great desire was to be a legally wedded wife. Ford was the son of Dr. James Ford, of Albemarle Street, Court physician and favourite, who had a very heavy monetary interest in Drury Lane, being at one time the sole capitalist, holding a mortgage of £31,500 on the theatre. Thus, Richard Ford was free to come and go just as he pleased; and, being a friend of Sheridan's, he seems to have taken full advantage of his position, even to the falling in love with Dorothy. There is no record that he had any particular ability beyond that of generally managing to attain his ends, and he has left but a shadowy character behind, with few to praise. Boaden said of him, that of all the men he had ever known there was none about whom there was so little to say. He asked men of Ford's standing at the Bar and on the Bench their recollections of him, and adds, "They knew him as I did personally, but he had impressed their minds as a fly did their hands, they had just shaken it and it was gone."

When the struggle over the promise and the taking of the name, Mrs. Ford, began it is not easy to say, but the two took a house, No. 5 Gower Street, some time in 1787, Dorothy calling herself privately Mrs. Ford, though all their friends of course knew that they were not married. Later, a little place was taken at Richmond, probably for the babies that quickly arrived, and as a week-end resort. In May 1787, a gossiping paragraph in a daily paper ran to the effect that "Mrs. Jordan, generally styled the daughter of Thalia, will soon make the Muse a grandmother." From time to time Dorothy used all her arts to induce this man of her choice to retrieve his promise by fulfilment, but always

unsuccessfully. In relation to this it is interesting to note—as an example of the far-seeing wisdom of the ancient writer who declared that there is nothing new under the sun—that in *The Great Illegitimates* runs the sentence, “She was *fed up* with the hopes that the old doctor would be reconciled to the match, and the consummation of the nuptials was never supposed on her part to be half a year distant.”

Fed up! To think that even our street slang is but a thing pilfered from the mouths of our forefathers!

Whether Richard Ford ever intended to fulfil his plighted word cannot be known; he had, however, done a very good thing for himself in forming this alliance. Dorothy’s salary, to begin with, was not to be despised by a man who, in addition to the paternal allowance, was living on hoped-for briefs; her benefits—two in a season—doubled that salary, and her summer tours added some hundreds of pounds to her exchequer. Not a great fortune in all, but a very welcome addition to a budding barrister’s fees.

Though comment was fast and free upon this union, Dorothy’s popularity and a general sympathetic belief in the honesty of her situation induced society to look with kindness upon her, and she was well received in various circles. Among her friends she counted the man who had championed her father through his life, had probably carried his dead body back to Ireland, and had raised a stone to his memory, Sir Francis Lumm; Lady Lumm accepted Dorothy as Mrs. Ford, though she knew the truth concerning the alliance, and pressed invitations to her routs and parties upon her. Cards—and card-sharping—were the great amusement of the time, but Dorothy is said never to have touched

a card. Among the noted players to be met there was Lady Collier—"famed for pilfering card money"—others were the Miss Dalrymples, Captain William Bayley, brother to Lord Anglesey, and his wife, John Foster Hill and his wife, Lady Anne, a daughter of Lord Molesworth; which seems to prove that the intimacy lasted a long time, as the Hills did not marry until 1792. The author of *The Great Illegitimates*—who speaks of himself as a mere stripling at the time—says of Dorothy at these gatherings:

"Our heroine's affability of manners and sweetness of deportment were the general themes of admiration, a sentiment still more enhanced when she electrified the auditors by warbling one of her ballads wild,

That flowed like softest music
O'er the placid surface of the deep.'

That in the late spring of 1787 Dorothy expected a child to be born to her would be one reason why she did not act constantly, and another was a certain feeling against her—irrespective of the Kembles—in the theatre, one which emanated from the manager, Tom King.

He had at first been delighted to hail the girl who could raise the revenue of the establishment, but her acting was not really pleasant to him. He was nearly sixty years old, and had been bred in a theatrical atmosphere too rarefied for the goddess Nature. All acting went by rule to his thinking; Tragedy was the stately Mrs. Siddons; Comedy was a gentle lady who curtsied and walked with mincing step, laid hand to heart, and in high-falutin strain protested this and that; in all circumstances she dressed and powdered to

perfection, exhibited an affected graciousness, and otherwise belonged to his early days.

Dorothy Jordan, whose laugh came from her heart, who dressed for her part without shame or vanity, shocked him and upset all his sententious mannerisms. How could he, being what he was, act comfortably with her, she being what she was? So, for his principle's sake, he began to edge her off the stage; he put on pieces which needed the affected ways of Miss Farren, or the pretty sprightliness of Mrs. Crouch; for fine ladies were his delight. This tendency became a habit, and Dorothy found herself relegated to second place in the theatre; though it was not so with the public, who gathered in little crowds round the stage door, only to see her step into her carriage, and talked of her salary, her success and her parts.

Yet she played sufficiently not to be forgotten, and her benefits were crowded, her receipts on such occasions often being larger than those of any other actor. Thus in May 1788 her benefit night brought her £325, while Kemble's produced £290, Bannister's (senior) £300, Bannister's (junior) £295, and Mrs. Crouch £280.

Perhaps disgusted with the managerial partiality, or perhaps for other and more personal reasons, Dorothy went north at the end of May 1787, before Drury Lane had closed, and acted again for Tate Wilkinson at Leeds, the theatre being brilliantly attended—among the audience the Duke of Norfolk and a crowd of his friends were prominent. Yet before her Yorkshire visit was over, the hurt feelings which had prompted her rush from London were revived by the knowledge that Miss Farren was billed at York and

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Hull in some of her own comedy pieces. Perhaps it was this little piece of independence on the part of Tate Wilkinson—for she considered Miss Farren's talent to be too near akin to her own to share so small a field—which induced her to play a trick on him; at least, he considered it as such. She recommended a Miss Barnes as a diamond of the first water, which was not sufficiently valued at Drury Lane. So Wilkinson engaged Miss Barnes, and appointed Juliet for her first appearance, “but the London lady's Juliet was very *hissing hot*, indeed, so much so, that she never played with me again. This was a joke to Mrs. Jordan but not so with me,” he adds.

Dorothy appeared in Edinburgh as early as June 7, and continued to act until the middle of July, though she did not leave the society of her kinsmen in the northern town until well into September, as a girl was born to her at the end of August. Was this child the Miss Bettsworth who enjoyed a brief period of prominence in 1806, or was she really Ford's daughter? When the newspapers were anticipating the opening of the theatres, one of Dorothy's champions in *The Public Advertiser* announced coarsely, under the headlines of “THEATRICALS. HOMeward BOUND. “Shirley: Owner. The Jordan from Edinburgh—a small sprightly vessel—went out of the London harbour laden—dropt her cargo in Edinburgh. The Siddons, been to refit—was said to be damaged in her upper works,” etc.

By Richard Ford, Dorothy had four children, that is, including this girl, born in 1787; only one was a boy, and he died at birth. In 1792, *The Morning Post* described her family as four, one being Frances Daly.

In 1798, the *Fashionable Cypriad* also gave her four girls, in addition to the then existing Fitzclarences, but in Boaden, Barrington and *The Great Illegitimates* only three girls, Frances, Dorothea and Lucy, are ever named. This is somewhat mysterious, and would be more so if it were not that all the accounts are based upon two, and these two designed to hide everything that did not redound to the credit of the subject of the biography. Thus it was quite possible to lose all trace of one of the girls, about whom there may have been some untoward story of her birth.

Mrs. Jordan came back to her work in the autumn of 1787, to find matters rather worse than better at Drury Lane. The theatre was ruled, not by its acting manager, Tom King, but by its actual manager and part proprietor, R. B. Sheridan, who had little time to attend to the needs of the drama; as King said, when he had appointments with him he was always in "a great hurry, or surrounded by company," and further declared that he had no power to refuse or accept a play, to appoint or discharge an actor, nor even to buy a yard of copper lace to add to a coat, "which was so much wanted." Thus, between one authority and another, or rather because of the want of properly delegated authority, the theatre was starved, and the company was deeply dissatisfied. King and Kemble were often at variance, so that for all concerned conditions were fast drifting to an impasse. In such a state Dorothy stood little chance, with King's disapprobation on the one hand, and on the other "the great uneasiness in the house of Kemble," which, it is said, led brother and sister to take every opportunity to lessen her importance.

Another source of great trouble to Dorothy was that Mrs. Robinson, who had married again, and was now Mrs. Taylor, had secured an engagement at Drury Lane, and was bent on proving herself the better actress of the two. Failing in this—one critic said, “On the stage Mrs. Taylor has less fear than we have for her”—she bent her energies constantly to annoying Dorothy, in and out of season, and used every art to make the other performers dislike her. Thus Dorothy was anything but happy in her work, she acted less than usual, and her popularity was said to have waned. This was rather a newspaper announcement than a real fact, and was founded on her absence from the stage, for which absence the initial and most important reason was a long and severe illness. She bore her children quickly, and seems to have suffered much in health at intervals through the period of gestation; so both public and employers, getting annoyed at these recurring absences, began a habit which lasted many years of calling her a malingerer. A comic opera had been projected, *Love in the East*, by James Cobb, with music by Linley, in which Dorothy was to have a chief part, thus there was especial anxiety for her reappearance; so the paragraphists were, as usual, busy with her name, and they found out or invented explanations which would please their public, and insinuated trouble between Ford and Dorothy, with consequent sulks on her part. That there should have been quarrels can scarcely be surprising, for she had lived with Richard Ford eighteen months, had borne him a child, and still he had not redeemed his promise of marrying her.

In the heyday of his passion for her Ford had

probably meant what he said, but his father still lived, and had the power materially to aid his career. Dr. Ford was at that time trying to realize his capital, one way being to sell what remained of his share in Drury Lane for £17,500, and Richard Ford may have been made nervous as to his father's intentions when he retired as he wished to do. Before the end of the year the doctor did retire, the papers said with a fortune of £100,000.

Gossip also asserted that Dorothy, being known as Mrs. Ford, was determined to act under that name, but that King absolutely refused so to bill her, while she, on her part, refused to play otherwise, and had resigned her salary. In answer to this Dorothy wrote to the papers giving a positive denial to the statement that she declined performing until she was announced in a manner different from what she had been, and asserting that a long continuance of severe illness had alone been the cause of her absence. This, however, was regarded as not true, and the heckling continued.

By this time Ford had entered Parliament as a member for Grinstead, and through Sheridan's interest probably hoped for some good post under government, being at the same time ambitious for high honours. Thus, if he was looking to the future, he may have considered that the woman who had yielded to him in trust could not be deemed worthy of so great a personage as himself. On the other hand, he may have learned hidden matters about the Bettesworth affair, which changed his intentions.

It may have been, too, that Dorothy's family influenced him, for to most of them her purse was con-

stantly opened. There were her mother and four or five brothers and sisters, most of whom seemed incapable of becoming independent. No one could have expected it of the mother, who, though not much over fifty, was at that time far from the possibility of earning her living, and Dorothy never gave any sign of even thinking her a burden, for she was the most loving of daughters.

Of the brothers, family papers say that Francis, probably the eldest, was, in his turn, called Captain Bland; he may have been in the militia, the navy, or the army, but the army lists for that period do not go so far back. He was a wild and reckless person, and for a long period an expense to his sister, always begging from her, and receiving help.

Nathaniel was never a charge upon Dorothy. He was sent to Brasenose College, Oxford, by his aunt, and matriculated in October 1786, taking his B.A. in 1790. What occupation he followed later is not known, but he settled down at Trelethyn, and married a lady named Phœbe James, sister-in-law of the Rev. William Richardson, vicar and canon of St. David's. Having no children, these Blands adopted a boy, nephew to Mrs. Nathaniel.

As for George, the third boy, he seems generally to have hung on to Dorothy's fortunes, being the cause of considerable friction between Dorothy, who wanted him to be included in the Drury Lane company, and first King and then Kemble, both of whom refused to admit him, though Kemble eventually gave way.

The eldest sister, Hester, lived with Dorothy for years, often acting in minor parts, but the date on which she went to Trelethyn and settled down is lost,

as is also the date on which the younger sister became a charge upon Mrs. Jordan.

This younger sister and one of Dorothy's daughters—it is suggested in family papers that her name was also Hester—remain but shadowy people in this record, for they did little to become known or to be reported in the papers, yet here and there evidence of their existence is given.

Of all these at this time George was the best known weight upon his sister, who could see nothing for him but a stage career; year after year she pressed his name upon the manager, and year after year that gentleman, like Ford, sought to soothe her with promises.

Though Tate Wilkinson does not mention him, George was with her each time she went to Edinburgh, and he was also with her at Cheltenham, besides acting in the provinces whenever an opening could be secured for him. Occasional and not always good-natured references were made to him in the papers; such as: "The male Jordan, brother of the Romp of that name, who has been on the Northern tour with his sister, and performed several characters, particularly in the singing line, is, we hear, to try his skill at the old Drury this winter." These would generally be followed by a counter announcement to such effect as (*The Public Advertiser*): "The brother of Mrs. Jordan, who has to boast much of her archness and comic power, is not yet to appear at Drury Lane." Thus one gathers that disappointment after disappointment waited upon Dorothy and George, and it is only possible to think that the cause was the young man's own inefficiency, for the management had many chances of studying him, and were always keen to secure a clever actor. He,

like Nathaniel, must have been a gentle and, to some extent, a retiring man; personally, he was said to have been remarkably like Dorothy both in feature, height, and slimness of figure.

Now, to all the unsuccessful members of her family Dorothy was lavish with money, and it must be admitted that if she earned much she also spent much—though history shows no evidence of personal extravagance on her part; Ford may have disliked the presence of so many of Dorothy's people about the house, and still more have disliked her spending money on them. But, on the whole, there must have been a great gulf fixed between the characters of the two; Ford, with a trained legal mind, alive to the value of pounds, shillings, and pence, as stepping-stones; and Dorothy, born and bred in Bohemia, nursed in the midst of financial difficulty, and endowed with an unusually generous nature. It is a marvellous thing that, however they lived, together or parted, there is no recorded word of Dorothy's derogatory to Richard Ford, and though later many journals fought a public battle over their separation, she let them say, and kept a discreet silence.

CHAPTER VII

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

“Sweet child of nature, born to pleasure,
Decked with Thalia’s dearest treasure,
Armed with smiles all hearts to gain,
With love and laughter in thy train ;
While with every changing scene
Fresh graces deck thy comic mien.
Thy wild notes sweetly thrill the heart,
By nature taught, disdaining art ;
No laboured sounds distort thy face,
All’s done with nature’s simple grace.”

ANON. *To D. J., as Harry Wildair.*

IT was not until the beginning of April 1788, the 5th to be precise, that Dorothy appeared again on the stage, having given up her part in *Love in the East*, which was produced in February. She knew that, much as her voice charmed the public, it was not sufficient to carry on the sustained effort of an opera. For this reason, when a year or two later, an attempt was made to include her services in the oratorio which took place annually at Drury Lane, she first hesitated and then definitely refused.

In spite of the reports of her unpopularity, the house was crowded for her benefit on May 2, when she played Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* for the first time, and she was so enthusiastically received in it that she gave the play renewed life for twenty years.

Her part abounded in sprightly dainty repartee, and her slight, beautiful figure was shown to perfection in the picturesque dress of the dissolute young man, Harry Wildair, that stage apology for immorality

which so delighted the good people of the period, who could never make the two ends of ideal and practice meet. John Adolphus in his *Memoirs of Bannister* fairly well puts the matter in saying that "the display of manly virtue at the close when a gentleman of high breeding and indisputable courage chooses to make honourable reparation to a lady for an undesigned affront, rather than extricate himself by means of a duel, throws around him a charm which makes us not only forget, but absolutely love the levities and the faults which before required all the charm of his wit and his graces barely to palliate."

At the end of the play it was Dorothy's business, as chief male character, to announce the next performance, which was to be *All for Love* on the Monday, and, with her acute sense of public feeling, she ended her announcement with the words spoken in the most respectful and kindly way, "being for the benefit of Mistress Siddons." At once the audience was newly captured, and burst into loud applause at her magnanimity, for all the world knew the feeling which existed in Siddonian circles against their Thalia.

Of Dorothy one critic said the next day that "her voice was sweet and distinct, and she played rakes with the airiest grace and handsomest leg that had been seen on the stage for a long time." Indeed, "the symmetry of her lower parts," to quote Boaden, was a constant inspiration to the journalistic pen. A year or two later one of the monthly magazines published a picture in which Mrs. Jordan, as Harry Wildair, and Mrs. Crouch were depicted as comparing the beauty of their silk-hosed legs for the judgment of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence.

Dorothy, however, played little this spring, in spite of the warm appreciation at her benefit, though she went on until June 13; and in July she, for the first time, acted at Cheltenham, taking with her her brother George, who had a part at a pound a week. This was the summer in which the mental illness of the King began, and he had gone to Cheltenham, hoping to regain the health which was so subtly and fearfully leaving him. So quick-witted Dorothy saw her opportunity, and arranged an engagement with the manager of the little Theatre Royal there. The Court, including the King and Queen, went to see her act several times, and her benefit night was again a triumph, an announcement being made that a gold medal was in course of manufacture for her, which the nobility and gentry of the countryside desired to present.

This medal took the form of an “elegant medallion locket,” richly set on one side with fine pearls, in the centre of which was a beautiful painting of the comic muse, from Sir Joshua Reynolds’s picture. On the reverse was placed in blue enamel an oval of fine brilliants, and in the centre the following inscription in gold letters on white enamel—

“Presented to Mrs. Jordan. Thalia’s sweetest child.”

The Drury Lane troubles through that spring and summer became acute and the company gradually disintegrated. King distrusted Kemble’s more advanced ideas, and Kemble unwillingly submitted to King’s old-fashioned ways; Gentleman Smith backed up King, yet felt himself out of the centre of things. The Kembles were afraid of Mrs. Jordan’s popularity, and Mrs. Jordan hated them for their air of superiority and their power to put her in the shade;

there was no love lost between Miss Farren and Mrs. Crouch on the one hand, and Dorothy on the other. She had to see them take parts which she regarded as peculiarly her own, and they knew that the public laughed louder and more heartily at and with her than it did at them. Mrs. Siddons often, as at her benefit this year, ranged herself among the comedy actresses rather than let Dorothy become too prominent. Sheridan's constant money troubles made him cut down the expenses of the theatre to such a close margin that King could put on no new plays, and had ever to ring the changes on the old, with the result that though he had the four greatest performers of the day in the theatre, Harris easily outrivalled him at Covent Garden.

Some of the older actors grew tired of the struggle, and the first to give up was Gentleman Smith, termed by Churchill in *The Rosciad*, "Smith the genteel, the airy, and the smart," who announced his retirement from Drury Lane and any other stage in April 1788, and made his last appearance on the 9th of June; thus weakening King's hands and strengthening those of Kemble. Palmer and Parsons drifted away, and then King, seeing three of his own supporters disappear, sent in his resignation and, to make it irrevocable, left London the same day. Indeed, the *personnel* of the theatre seemed to be almost in the condition of the "one-hoss shay," that is of suddenly and entirely falling to pieces.

In the autumn the company was without a manager, for King was gone and Kemble was standing out for his own terms, including a certain amount of freedom in internal arrangements; in fact, he intended

to be manager and not just a buffer between Sheridan and all the small troubles incidental to a theatre. He gained his way, of course, for Sheridan had no choice.

When the Duke of Clarence, known then as Prince William, was first attracted to Dorothy no one can say; but during October of 1788 he was at the theatre to see the first performance of *Love for Love*, a play which Genest described as without a spark of honour or virtue in any person.

Bannister Junior took the part of Ben the sailor, and entering the Green Room on the first night ready to appear on the stage, he found the Prince there, and was subjected to a critical examination.

“What!” said William, “would you wear that coloured handkerchief round your neck? *That* must be changed.”

Upon this a black handkerchief was found, and “the good-natured, open-hearted Prince assisted with his own hand” to give it the correct position and knot, and in other ways he helped to make the actor as like as possible to a genuine son of the ocean.

It is not likely that so soon as this the Prince was attracted to Dorothy, for her second Ford child was born either in October or November, so she was not in the theatre. On the 22nd of the latter month *The Morning Post* declared that it would be an advantage to Drury Lane when Mrs. Jordan recovered, as hers were the only bills from that quarter that were duly honoured.

While she was away from the theatre Mrs. Inchbald's farce, *The Child of Nature*, was first played at Covent Garden, with Miss Brunton in the chief part, and on seeing it George Saville Carey, dramatist,

author of *The Nut-brown Maid*, and son of the man who wrote "God Save the King," sent two verses to *The Morning Post*, which fixed the name of "Child of Nature" on Dorothy for evermore.

"The play, Fair Inchbald, surely is miscalled,
I fain would have you name the brat again;
That name was surely long ago forestalled,
The *Child of Nature* is at Drury Lane.

"Yet am I pleased with thy prolific Muse,
Nor would I wish to check thy rising fame,
Nature thought fit a favourite to choose,
The world approved, and Jordan is her name."

Through that winter Dorothy acted constantly and in several new parts. She was Beatrice in a play by Bickerstaff, renamed by Kemble *The Panel*; *The Impostors* was written specially for her by Cumberland, but it was weak in construction, and, to the author's disgust, who blamed Dorothy, it only ran four nights. She took Rosalind for her benefit in December, played in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy*, while the old plays, *The Devil to Pay* and *The Romp* held their own. The latter being in book form, published at one shilling, was dedicated by the author to Mrs. Jordan in the following words: "You have made the piece particularly your own by your happy conception and admirable representation of the principal character, and have raised this bagatelle to an importance which the most sanguine partiality of its author could never have hoped for. You have rescued it from oblivion and fostered it with the exertion of your splendid talents, and it is now respectfully offered to your acceptance."

In her desire to become known as a mistress of polite comedy—perhaps she also wished to show that

she could equal Miss Farren on her own ground—Dorothy took the part of Lady Bell in *Know Your Own Mind*, which the critics agreed in thinking less than admirable; Boaden describing her in this representation of a fine lady as “a smart soubrette, who had hurried on her ladies’ finest apparel, and overacted the character to avoid being detected.”

But in spite of a mistake of this sort Dorothy Jordan this winter sealed her fame for all time, and, as a writer in *The Dramatic Magazine* somewhat vulgarly says, she “fairly beat Melpomene” (Mrs. Siddons as typifying tragedy) “out of the field.” Another opinion, published in *The Rambler*, assured the public that: “Few actresses have so suddenly gained or, indeed, so well deserved the universal approval of the town as Mrs. Jordan. She has given celebrity to several dramatic pieces that but for her would never most probably have been revived.” And later the same writer added: “Nothing can be a greater proof of excellence than that her spritely, animated Miss Tomboy occasioned the revival of *The Romp*, which had an astonishing run at Drury Lane, inasmuch that the receipts of the House when this actress performed greatly exceeded the attractions of the famous Melpomene.”

As for Mrs. Siddons there was a grain of truth about her being beaten out of the field, though she by no means ceased to play. She had—her brother being manager—relinquished her contract to act at least three times a week for £30, for the more advantageous one of acting only when she chose on a payment of £30 a night, which meant that she acted less and gained more.

The feeling between Dorothy and the Kembles grew more bitter after this; Kemble's first year was, in fact, distinguished by quarrels with both actors and actresses, who resented his improvements and his high-handed methods of carrying them out; comments upon all of which the papers joyfully published. With Dorothy matters came to a crisis early in January 1789, and on the 10th she was not at the theatre, a Mrs. Foster taking her part. It may have been illness, or it may have been a quarrel which kept her away, for she was angry about her brother, as Kemble not only refused to take him, but had even endeavoured to prevent his presence in the stage part of the theatre at all, *The Morning Post* reporting that the door-keeper was fined five shillings for allowing him entrance. This was a small penalty for a small thing, for Kemble fined Mrs. Crouch five guineas for refusing to appear when he and she had had a desperate quarrel concerning her clothes.

If Dorothy was in a general state of irritation about George, she was also brooding over the fact that she who drew the largest audiences to the theatre was securing only twelve guineas a week, while Mrs. Siddons had thirty. However, she soon recovered, for her absence only lasted eleven days, but the strain between Thalia and Melpomene grew keener, and a long letter appeared one day in March in *The Morning Post* commenting on a saying by Dorothy's friends that she ought not to act on the same night as Mrs. Siddons, it being alleged that by so doing she filled the house for her rival and was thus forced to hold up the train of the tragedy queen.

Then Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, took

advantage of these rumours to offer her a position in his theatre at any salary she liked to name. Upon this Dorothy wrote to Sheridan, detailing the points of her complaints concerning the Kembles, telling him of the Harris offer, and saying that it was not to her interest to continue to play at Drury Lane. Sheridan was at this time deep in the arraignment of Warren Hastings, but this was too important a matter to be put aside, and he went to see Dorothy, promised to do away with all her grievances, and suggested £30 a week as a salary.

She had no real desire to change her theatre, and at once agreed to his terms, so for the rest of the spring she was constantly acting.

The London season of 1789 over, Dorothy took a week's engagement at Richmond, starting on June 29, in *The Constant Couple*, and following it with *The Romp*, the manager Edwin on opening the theatre announcing her advent in a prologue of which two lines ran—

“My next vast merit, I must have a word on!
Ecod! d'ye know, I've got you Mistress Jordan!”

and the succeeding lines made mention of her leg, her ankle, her foot, and promised the girls a kiss from Harry Wildair.

At the end of the week she did one of her impulsively generous deeds. She had heard that Tate Wilkinson had been crippled by an accident, so offered to act Sir Harry Wildair and Nell for him for nothing at his benefit on Monday, the 7th of July. This if her Richmond engagement finished on the 5th left her little time to get to Leeds. It is needless to say that Wilkinson accepted her offer with alacrity,

and thought himself very fortunate; but he estimated a little too nicely what he thought Mrs. Jordan was likely to do. Thus, fearing that she could not get to him in time, he altered the day from Monday to Wednesday the 9th, and then watched with some misgiving for the arrival of the actress. Sunday, Monday morning and she did not come; his spirits rose, he began to pat himself for his acumen; two o'clock on Monday and she had not arrived; then he was quite sure that he had done the wise thing, for he persuaded himself that she would not think of playing without a previous rehearsal.

The Fords—to give them the name Dorothy wished and under which she was billed at Leeds—had, however, travelled by post from Richmond, and arrived in the town on the Monday afternoon; and as they entered it the first thing Dorothy looked for was a theatre bill. On seeing one her warm feelings received a shock, for her name was not upon it, and she naturally thought that Wilkinson had simply put her aside, and was angry that she should have taken so much trouble for nothing. At half-past four the gentleman received a note from her, saying that she was in the town and was surprised not to see her name announced for that night; so he went—with trepidation, we may believe—to her hotel, grumbling to himself that any one in their senses would think it too great a hardship to undergo two exhausting performances just after finishing such a journey. He must have felt uneasy about the interview, for he had had some experience of Dorothy indignant; and truly it was scarcely pleasant. To all his excuses the actress replied that she would act that night or not at all;

that she could not stay beyond the next day, as her engagement with Mr. Jackson of Edinburgh involved a fine of £500 if she were not there at the time fixed. Wilkinson tried persuasion and cajolery, pointing out how terribly the town would be offended if she did not perform at his benefit, and that every one was speaking in praise of her generosity in acting for nothing.

“Nothing!” said the irritated lady, “nothing! No, I cannot stay here three days, risk my fine at Edinburgh and all for nothing; I shall want thirty guineas if I stay.”

Poor Wilkinson felt that the glory of his benefit had departed, and he debated with himself whether, after all, he would not gain as much without her as with her on such terms; then Dorothy relented, and said she would stay and act for twenty guineas. And so the matter was fixed.

Mrs. Jordan was expecting the birth of another babe in the winter, and Wilkinson suggests that the ladies at Leeds considered her representation of Sir Harry Wildair indelicate under such conditions; but it may be, on the other hand, that the whole affair had destroyed that happy balance of mind which could ensure success; yet, to put the third possibility, the good Tate may have been deaf to the applause as he had lost twenty guineas; for he says there was no great applause shown such as she was accustomed to, for though ladies in London would laugh at Farquhar and Congreve, those in the country judged Sir Harry at best as a loose companion, his chastity being anything but strengthened when acted by a woman. So he concludes that Dorothy, being unappreciated, was

angry with her reception; yet "they parted excellent good friends."

But it is a question whether Mrs. Jordan was treated by the Yorkshire audience with any particular disdain. It seemed to be generally acknowledged that they, in common with other country audiences, were slow to applaud, so much so that even their idol the Queen of Tragedy that very summer of 1789 felt depressed by their attitude when she played Mary Queen of Scots to them, saying that it took double the strength and force of will to act in the provinces than it took on the London boards.

On the way to Leeds Dorothy was to play at Harrogate for several nights, which was probably a further reason for her annoyance with Wilkinson's change of dates. While playing there a young, dark-eyed girl sat in the gallery watching this noted "star," one who later was known as Harriot Mellon, and who married Coutts, the banker, becoming eventually Duchess of St. Albans.

Dorothy's mother was at that time in bad health, and it may be that she left her in that resort for invalids, while she went on to the Scotch capital, where of necessity she was late in arriving, Jackson, the manager, being in an irate frame of mind, and seriously contemplating a demand for the £500. It was certainly a great temptation to him as his affairs were in a particularly bad state, and such a sum of money would have been a godsend. However, the demand would also have meant the loss of Mrs. Jordan's presence on his boards, and probably such a retaliation from the public as would have precipitated his total failure.

So he bad-temperedly waived his legal right, and Mrs. Jordan proceeded to charm the people of the North into gaiety, also to renew her friendship with her uncle John Bland and his family, with all of whom she again acted.

Before her engagement was completed she had news that her mother was likely to die, and as she had—of all the children—been the only one to help or do anything for that mother, it was scarcely likely that she would let business cause her to desert her at the last. Thus the plays had to proceed without Dorothy, and poor Grace Philipps, who had made one great mistake, who had had about fifteen years of presumably happy married life with a man who, tempted beyond his strength, left her; who had struggled hard for her children until one of them gladly took up the burden and worked for her—Grace Philipps died, an inconsiderable person, who must have left the world little poorer for her loss, though her daughter's grief was great. In the *Edinburgh Herald* some time later appeared the following lines, written by Dorothy¹—

ON THE DEATH OF A MOTHER.

"Be ready, reader, if thou hast a tear,
Nor blush if sympathy bestows it here!
For a lost mother, hear a daughter's moan,
Catch the sad sounds, and learn like her to groan.
Yet, all those groans, sad echoes all to mine,
Must prove faint offerings at so dear a shrine.
If feeble these, how feebler far must be
The tribute to be paid by Poesy!
The bleeding heart, that's whelm'd with real woe,
Affects no flowers near Helicon that grow;
Sobs and swoln sighs ill suit smooth-numbered lay,—
The tear that waters cypress, drowns the bay.

¹ They were also published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Dec. 1811, when her name was most prominently before the public.

Hard, then, must be the task, in mournful verse,
 The praise of a lost parent to rehearse.
 Mild suffering saint exemplary through life,
 A tender mother, and a patient wife ;
 Whose firm fidelity no wrongs could shake,
 While curb'd resentment was forbid to speak.
 Thus, silent anguish mark'd her for his own,
 And comfort, coming late, was barely known ;
 It, like a shadow, smiled and slipped away,
 For churlish Death refused to let it stay ;
 A two-fold dart he level'd, to destroy,
 At once, both mother's life and daughter's joy.
 Better a double summons had been given,
 To wipe out sorrow's score, and make all even,
 By kindly calling both at once to Heaven !"

They are not particularly good, but they give some hints as to the mother's character—

" Whose firm fidelity no wrongs could shake,
 While curb'd resentment was forbid to speak."

We here find the same quality which animated Dorothy ; loyalty under loss and ill-treatment, a loyalty which refused to divulge the truth about Francis Bland or to give rumour the chance of blaming him.

Jackson had no idea of letting Dorothy off scot free, he was in such difficulties that he probably eagerly hailed any method of evading his payments, so she could get no money from him, and had to borrow to pay her expenses in Edinburgh. The company of which she was for a time a member went on to Glasgow, and then, before leaving, the Fords wrung from Jackson a bill for £100 to be paid in London. He avenged himself by publishing various statements against Dorothy, among them that her presence had not brought him any advantage, and comparing the receipts from her acting with the sums that Mrs. Siddons had drawn from the public earlier.

From Edinburgh the Fords went on to Chester, and there Jackson's bill was returned to them dishonoured,

and they heard of his doings in Glasgow, which drew a public letter from Dorothy, explaining the straits to which she had been put, and ending with—

“I have now entirely done with the subject, and, thank God, with Mr. Jackson, who, I hope, by his punctuality to pay his present *protested note*, will not compel me to resume any acquaintance with him by the methods the law points out.

“P.S.—As to Mr. Jackson’s comparative statement of the receipts, I am no judge, I can only say that the houses were apparently very good when I performed; perhaps it would not have been amiss, but *rather fairer*, if he had said that in the year 1785, from whence he drew Mrs. Siddons’s account, that lady performed at the advanced London prices.”

CHAPTER VIII

A RELAPSE

“Apologies for plays, experience shows,
Are things almost as useless as the beaux.
Whate'er we say (like them) we neither move
Your friendship, pity, anger, nor your love.
'Tis interest turns the globe: let us but find,
The way to please you, and you'll soon be kind:
But to expect, you'd for our sakes approve,
Is just as though you for their sakes should love.”

VANBRUGH, *The Relapse*.

IN the summer of 1789, George Bland was acting at Liverpool, independently of his sister, and there he did what the impecunious young man so often 'does, he married. Not that he made an unworldly choice, but it was too quick a one to be the result of anything but sudden attraction. The lady, I can scarcely call her fair, was Maria Romanzini, whom Daly had attempted to win in 1781, and who had been acting with Dorothy at Drury Lane. Her child-life had been one of hardship, for her mother—like Topsy, she seems to have had no father—was a poor Jewess, who was glad enough when Cady, the hairdresser at the Royal Circus, suggested that the little one had sufficient voice even then to be valuable as a performer. Through his influence the child was articled to the Circus, doing little recitations at a very small salary. As she possessed arch humour and a pretty way of singing, she soon became a favourite, and when the Patent Theatre made an attack on the Circus, because of the child plays acted there, she was one of the company who had a narrow escape from imprisonment.

In appearance, she was very small and dark, and

though graceful as a girl, she grew too broad with advancing years. Her deep voice was effective in operas, and in plays that needed much singing. Leigh Hunt said of her when writing on *The Old Actors*, "Mrs. Bland, the favourite little singer, with a voice like her name, and a short, thick person, and dark face to match, whom her sweet ballads made ever welcome."

The urgent need to live seems to have divested both her and her mother of any steady principle, and various stories are told of the way they used to conform to any demand which the mischievous public made upon them. *The Secret History of the Green Room* asserts that, when in Liverpool in 1789, Miss Romanzini knew that there were a great number of Roman Catholics in the town, and that they liberally patronized those of their own persuasion, so she regularly displayed her devotion at their chapels. But a wicked wag, by circulating the report of her being a Jewess, obliged her to sit sewing at her window every Saturday afternoon, to show that she broke the Sabbath; and the better to contradict the assertion, she made her mother buy a live pig in the evening, and go to every person with whom she could pretend business, "and pulling the young Sir Joseph Maubrey by the tail, tell that it was for the dinner of her and her daughter next day."

Romanzini was due at Drury Lane in the autumn of 1789, but, encouraged by Dorothy's increase of salary, she refused to return unless her own was increased. This the management would not agree to, so, after a few weeks, she and her bridegroom appeared in London, and the bride took up her work at the old price.

That two favourite actresses now had an interest in George Bland must have somewhat embarrassed Kemble, and he at last succumbed to the pressure put upon him, for early in February 1790, George acted Sebastian to Dorothy's Viola. How this was brought about is left to conjecture, also why Dorothy did not act at all in the autumn of 1789. Was it true that her increase of salary was not being paid, as it was rumoured in the summer? or was it that she was using her absence to force Kemble to include her brother in the company? Or was it solely because a third daughter was born to her this winter, and she was probably unable to work in the preceding months?

From February 1790, however, she was acting incessantly, sometimes as much as five nights a week, taking several new plays through the season, by which she added the parts of Polly Honeycomb, Lætitia Hardy in *The Belle's Stratagem*, and of Lydia Languish to her list. She also created for her benefit, in March, Little Pickle, in *The Spoiled Child*, a play supposed to have been written by Richard Ford, but the papers of the day asserted that Dorothy herself was the author. Boaden suggests that it was an anonymous production by Bickerstaff, which is quite likely, Dorothy altering it to suit her ideas, for years later she had a play acted of which she was part author.

There is in the British Museum, a little slip of paper, relating to this benefit night, which runs :

“Received, 27 March, 1790, of Mr. Westley, Thirty-nine pounds 17/7 in full for my benefit balance this season.

“DOROTHEA JORDAN.

£39. 17. 7.”

As Mrs. Siddons did not act at all at Drury Lane this season, it is probable that Dorothy was more contented, especially as her brother seemed, at last, to have won a position of independence. George Bland was given by Kemble the really good salary for a beginner in London of £5 a week, an arrangement which lasted some time. In October 1791 he and his wife went with the Drury Lane Company to the Haymarket; *The Bon Ton Magazine* commenting in its usual frank fashion: "Those who heard her masculine pipe and the effeminate voice of her husband, wonder much at the circumstance of a bouncing boy."

History places three children to the credit of the Blands; this bouncing boy of 1791, and twin boys in 1792, but there may have been more. About the twins *The Secret History of the Green Room* tells a story apropos of Bland: "The character that has given him most reputation is Arionelli, in *The Son-in-law*, which he performed at the Haymarket, with a degree of applause that might have pleased a Siddons or a Dall.¹ He assumed the Italian Catastro in a most happy manner, and in the songs displayed not only good taste, but a powerful voice. The plaudits he received were extraordinary, and the good humour of the audience was not a little increased when he said—

"' Marriage! Oh! dat is quite out of my way.'

"Wilson, as Cranby, retorted with an original sentence—

"' Indeed! Then how came you to have twins t'other day?' A retort which produced a universal burst of laughter."

¹ An actress then well known at Covent Garden.

For several years Mr. and Mrs. Bland acted together, and then we find Maria frequently in London, while her husband's name appeared only on provincial bills. So George and his wife drifted apart, and then gossip asserted that when they were together she not only betrayed, but ill-treated him. Caulfield, the comedian, then shared her home, and she had many children, one of whom died tragically. She was one day, says Oxberry in his *Memoirs*, working some expensive lace into a dress, and being suddenly called from the room, she went back, after an interval, to find that one of the children had cut the lace to pieces. In a rage, Maria shook the poor little thing violently, and put it out of the door. At length, going out of the room, she found the child lying dead on the mat. This horrible event brought on a fit of insanity, from which, however, she recovered, and worked many years, though she was insane at the end of her life.

Bland, alone, cast from his home, and unsuccessful—"in what is called the *walking gentleman* he is more than useful, his person and deportment being very genteel," was a height of praise with which he could surely have cheerfully dispensed—eventually went to America, that place of hope for English actors, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1807, appeared the following paragraph—

"At Boston, in America, about four months since, in the utmost poverty and indigence, poor Bland, the brother of Mrs. Jordan, and husband of Mrs. Bland of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane."

Poor Bland! It expressed the general feeling about a man who was not clever, but who won general affection. Dorothy Jordan seemed to bear Maria Teresa no

malice, however, and towards the end of her life spoke well of her professional qualities, thus there may have been more in the separation than is revealed.

It would probably have been no satisfaction to Bland to know that his successor, Caulfield, shared his own fate, of dying alone in America, though it was not until 1815, when he fell down in a fit, and expired on a Kentucky stage.

As for Mrs. Bland, it was not until January 1838 that a morning paper announcement ran: "Mrs. Bland died this day, aged 75; she married the brother of Mrs. Jordan, but the chances are that those who never aided her living are not likely to mourn for her dead! 'O world, thy slippery turns'—what a ballad singer! in appearance like a fillet of veal on castors—it was vox, et præterea nihil—but *what a vox!*!"

During the summer and second half of the year 1790, also in the first half of 1791, there is little reported about Dorothy's movements, though she seems to have been as busy as before; and it was at this time that a certain scandal began to be whispered, which, however, will be detailed in the next chapter.

She had, again this winter, several new characters to support, which always pleased her, among them being *The Greek Slave*, altered from an old play; *Better Late Than Never*, which was a failure, though her acting in it was warmly praised, and *The Intriguing Chambermaid*. During the spring and summer of 1791 she was anything but well, and began to spit blood, which probably frightened her and upset her usual happy serenity. The doctor ordered her a thorough change of air, so after a week or so at Richmond, she went up north with Richard Ford, who was at this

period very particular in accompanying her everywhere. She had made quite good business terms with Wilkinson, that she should act on shares and have a clear benefit on the Saturday in Assize week, and in the following week she was to act conditionally on one night, which was to be arranged when they met.

Wilkinson advertised her to play on the first night *The Country Girl* and *The Devil to Pay*. As Miss Peggy in the first was an exhausting part, involving singing, and generally an encore, Dorothy said that she could not do both on one evening; *The Devil to Pay* must wait. So she followed Peggy with a play entitled *The Mock Doctor*.

The only account of the trouble in Yorkshire this summer is given by Tate Wilkinson, a somewhat partial witness, and certainly some discount should be made from this record of Dorothy's ill-doings. Though *The Country Girl*, as first given by Mrs. Brown, was warmly received in York, Tate says that the Yorkshire ladies were now too delicately minded to enjoy it, and the audience was not enthusiastic; he adds that Dorothy was in a devil of a humour, and that she grumbled to him that had the Yorkshire people possessed either life or soul she would have sung to them.

"Sing!" he besought her, and indicated a song written by Miss Ryder, a daughter of the Ryder to whom she had owed the first step in her profession. She could not refuse that, and Wilkinson says, "She *did* sing it, and the whole theatre was one voice, one soul, one mind, to burst into loud encores, and to do her great merit justice." But the reaction came, and the evening did not close so well as it might have done.

On Tuesday things went more successfully with

The Devil to Pay and *The Trip to Scarborough*, and with hilarity and good humour the Fords supped with Wilkinson. But with each night matters dragged more slowly, the audiences were lukewarm, and Dorothy's spirits were dashed; then her natural devilry helped to spoil matters. She uttered scathing comments on the public who could not appreciate her, and these were carefully repeated through the town. Mrs. Esten had acted Rosalind to them, and they had fallen in love with her languorous speech and movements, which they preferred to the more roguish acting of Dorothy, so, according to Wilkinson, she began, "first to pin, then to sew, and by degrees to bolt and bar up all her acting," and seemed more ready to offend than conciliate, declaring that she had a double weight to carry, a stupid audience and a stupid company. On Friday there was only £25 in the house, and her benefit the next night was poor. After the second act she told the manager she would not play in York again, but he, thinking this only a fit of temper, announced her for Monday; which was curious, seeing that he had been grumbling about the bad receipts.

At the end of the evening the actress and the manager had a row, she "almost swearing that she would not act again, and speaking disrespectfully of the beggarly engagement she had entered into." This touched Wilkinson—who prided himself on his liberality and justice—in a tender spot, and he read her a lecture, adding for his reader's information—

"Surely I had a right to speak when so wronged: for if she was a theatrical duchess, why I was a theatrical monarch—Who's afraid!"

Dorothy reddened and looked angry at the lecture,

and though Wilkinson hoped she would relent and become good-humoured, "her mind settled quite gloomy," and he says she never forgave him his words.

The Fords were to have dined with the Wilkinsons on the Sunday, and about midnight on Saturday the following letter was delivered at the house of the latter—

"I have mentioned to Mrs. Ford the substance of the conversation you favoured me with this evening, and stated to her how anxious you were that she should enlarge her engagement; she appears, however, to be so very averse to it that I must desist from further pressing her. The night due to you she is ready to perform on next Wednesday,¹ or any earlier time you may please to appoint. She desires me to add, that as she feels herself very unwell and much fatigued, she is desirous of passing a day or two in the country, and therefore hopes that you will excuse her from doing herself the pleasure of waiting upon you and Mrs. Wilkinson to-morrow.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your very obedient, humble servant,
"RICHARD FORD."

That there was something more than Wilkinson described to make Dorothy dissatisfied with her engagement was very possible, for the writer of *The Great Illegitimates* declares that she was subject to gross insult while on the stage from the interference of some rigid moralists, in consequence of her living

¹ She was to perform that night without payment.

with Ford. Wilkinson was probably too angry to betray this, for he was, where his feelings were concerned, quite untrustworthy.

Thus, when praising a new young actress in "the Jordan line," he said that Dorothy must be a dupe to her own art, if she supposed that a *girl of eighteen* would not please better than an old married one of *forty-four*." Yet when the book in which this was written came out, Dorothy was only then *thirty-four*!

Kemble was in York *en route* to Newcastle, and staying with the Mayor, who was a personal friend, and this probably added bitterness to Dorothy's anger, for the Kemble-Jordan feud never really died out. Much has been said about the greed of Kemble and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, and much has been said to prove that they were generous, yet the ways of John Kemble with Tate Wilkinson were scarcely those of a generous heart.

In his embarrassment, Wilkinson went to Kemble, who saw Dorothy Jordan, and arranged that she should take a week at Newcastle with his brother Stephen in his stead, while he acted in York. To Tate Wilkinson he dictated terms.

"Mrs. Jordan shall not play on the Wednesday, as that is the most fashionable night, but I will play, and, as I act for fame, not for money, I will take only thirty guineas in payment."

The horrified Wilkinson ejaculated "Pounds!"

"Then that's the end of the matter," equably returned Kemble.

"Then guineas let it be," murmured the manager, who was, to use his own words, "*jammed in a corner*."

However, Wilkinson was no fool, so he went home

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and wrote to Dorothy, giving her the alternative of paying him thirty pounds or being advertised as performing on the Tuesday. To which she replied—

“SIR,

“I agree with pleasure to your proposal of giving you thirty pounds rather than ever perform in York again. I shall return to-morrow and settle the balance of the account.

“I am, dear sir,

“Your obliged, humble servant,
“D. FORD.”

The theatre had to be closed on the Monday, and Tate Wilkinson issued the following notice—

“Theatre Royal, York,
“Monday, August 15, 1791.

“Mr. Wilkinson is under the disagreeable necessity of closing the theatre this evening, as Mrs. Jordan has positively declined any future performance on this stage: Mr. Wilkinson is extremely sorry for the disappointment, but has the unexpected satisfaction of informing the public that

MR. KEMBLE

Manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

(whose abilities are universally known and established), perceiving Mr. Wilkinson's embarrassed situation, has kindly offered his assistance during this *Festival Week*, and will appear to-morrow, in the character,

OTHELLO

MOOR OF VENICE.”

However, the clever Tate crowed a little too soon, for he was not yet out of his difficulty.

Dorothy returned to York on the Monday, and paid him the £30, saying that she had done rightly, and that she would be ruined as an actress if she were to play to such a milk-and-water audience. But the Kembles dined with him that Monday, and, at the table, Kemble calmly announced that, after all, he would not play for thirty guineas on Wednesday, that it was not worth his trouble or attention, and that it would be to slight his reputation if he did not clear £160 for the five nights; therefore he would share the house that night. He had probably heard that that was the arrangement with Mrs. Jordan during that uncomfortable week, and would not condescend to play for less.

The thunderstruck manager refused peremptorily, and they separated. When the Tuesday rehearsal time came, Kemble was in bed, having given orders that he was not to be disturbed; which put his friend, the Mayor, into a panic for his own reputation with the townspeople. However, Kemble stolidly refused to appear unless "the mistake about Wednesday were put right," and at one o'clock, Wilkinson again explained affairs to the public and announced *The Battle of Hexham* without Kemble. The actor was probably just trying to screw as much as he could get out of the manager, for when the agitated Mayor suggested a compromise, the terms of which, however, Wilkinson did not reveal, both parties accepted it. So the business-like tragedian played, and netted nearly £150 for the rest of the week.

Mrs. Jordan set out for Newcastle, but Kemble

seems to have played her as false as he did Wilkinson, for he had not troubled properly to instruct his brother Stephen as to what was arranged, nor even to have learned whether this change of plan was such as Stephen Kemble's company could fall into. That actor's people were prepared for Kemble, they knew nothing of Mrs. Jordan's farces, and could not get them up in the few days given them, so they did not even leave Lancaster; and though Newcastle was billed with *The Country Girl*, Mrs. Jordan was the only actor present in the town.

It was probably the most mortifying summer Dorothy had known, and she talked of bringing an action against the Kembles, but the matter died down, though it is scarcely likely that the anger raised was easily allayed.

Wilkinson was a good bargainer, and never could reconcile himself to the fact that one of his own poorly paid actresses should have risen to such a height as to be able to dictate terms to him, thus in his books he indulged in little hits at Dorothy, such as the following—

“But now, dear Mrs. Jordan, you do like the cash, and I believe and hope you take care of it; that you love to receive it I know, and so does every other manager; you *have* made us all feel that. You will excuse me being jocular.”

And again—

“Mrs. Jordan is certainly the lucky child o' fortune, billed, caressed, and nursed in the lap o' Nature; she is undoubtedly the reigning Thalia of the age 1791, and deservedly so; and to her comic talent, archness, whim, and fancy, I submissively bow, and also acknow-

ledge her humanity and goodness to her late parent. But am compelled, as Mr. Manager, to declare, like Mr. Foote in his *Devil upon Two Sticks*, that Mrs. Jordan, at making a bargain, is too many for the cunningest devil of us all."

When Kemble forced the poor man to pay him thirty guineas for an evening which Dorothy was giving free of charge, he was certainly out-doing Mrs. Jordan, and when Wilkinson, in his turn, forced Dorothy to pay that thirty guineas, really the evidence of being "the cunningest devil at making a bargain" seems to rest with Tate Wilkinson.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRINCE AND MR. FORD

“Behold sportive Jordan, that favourite fair,
Who was sent by mankind to avert your despair;
With her you’ve successfully baited your trap,
She’s in truth the best feather you have in your cap.
How you got her, to me, I must own, is a wonder,
When I think of your natural aptness to blunder.”

ANTHONY PASQUIN.

ACTORS have always desired the favour of princes, for it affects their social status and heightens their commercial value. Thus Dorothy was fortunate in that she had not been in London a month before the Prince of Wales went to see her in *The Country Girl*, was present when she played Viola on November 16, 1785, and often saw her act later.

On January 18, 1786, “their Majesties seemed highly entertained with the pert humour of Mrs. Jordan in *The Country Girl* and *The Romp*.” That autumn they saw her in *Richard Cœur de Lion*, and they were present with the Princesses when she played in *Love for Love* the following year. They may also have gone on other occasions, as the above are but chance discoveries.

Prince William Henry also must have seen her in the first autumn of her London career, as he was in London at the end of September and part of October, and from time to time he had many opportunities of studying the vivacious young actress. But it was not until Dorothy captured his heart by the beauty of her

form and the witchery of her high spirits in the spring of 1790, when she played Little Pickle in *The Spoilt Child*, that he could have thought seriously of her. However, as he was appointed to command the *Valiant* in May of that year, he had little chance of allowing his admiration any outlet, and it was perhaps not until the end of November, when his ship was paid off and he was withdrawn from the sea with the title of Rear-Admiral, that he saw Little Pickle again. His ship was sailing in home waters, however, during October and November 1790, and he may have occasionally been in London then.

The Duke—a title recently conferred upon him—was the product of his family and his time; brutalized by the educational lash in his boyhood, his emotions stunted by lack of parental affection, treated with such parsimony by his father that debt became an inevitable condition, inducted into licentiousness by his licentious elder brother, he had the vices of the Carolian Court without any of its picturesqueness. Differently trained and circumstanced, he would probably have been quite an amiable and respectable man; but the children of George III, boys and girls alike, had little chance of attaining either real happiness or virtue.

Between the ages of fourteen and fifty-four Prince William made several attempts to evade the family Marriage Act, which decreed that no prince or princess should marry any one who was not royal, and all these attempts being frustrated, he did quite conveniently without marriage. Like the jolly tar in the song, he was credited with a wife—or two—in every port, and his erotic doings were for long the subject of waggish paragraphs.

At fourteen he was taken to the watch-house for brawling at Vauxhall. He had gone to a masquerade there as a young sailor, and was flirting with a nun, when a Spanish Grandee began to pester the latter. High words ended in a general row, and all the party were marched off by the watchmen. When the young men unmasked before their captors the latter heard—

“Eh, George, is that you?” from the sailor to the Spanish Grandee; and “Eh, William, is that you?” from the Spanish Grandee to the sailor. This episode earned the boy William banishment on the Channel Fleet. His next vagary was more sentimental, and intended to be strictly honourable. For at sixteen he fell in love with the Hon. Julia Fortescue, a girl of his own age, and one of the rising beauties of the Court. As the Fortescues’ house fronted on the Green Park, these children had plenty of opportunities to meet and discuss their approaching marriage, a ceremony only prevented “by the iniquitous Marriage Act.” Then the affair being discovered, the little Julia was sent in disgrace to Scotland—where she married later—by her royally disgraced parents. The boy prince was shipped off again to Gibraltar, and then to America and Jamaica; at which last place the story went that he secured the convenient absence of a tiresome husband while he consoled the fascinating wife.

Early in William’s reign the first part of a book was published and dedicated to the British nation, bearing the title, “*Memoirs and Amorous Adventures by Sea and Land of King William IV.* Interspersed with One Hundred Curious Anecdotes. By Captain M—, R.N., who has the honour of being a shipmate of his Majesty’s.” Only this first part was published, and

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William, Duke of Clarence.
From a miniature by Coxway.

thus not many of the hundred curious anecdotes reached public knowledge, otherwise many more love adventures would have furnished cause for merriment among the subjects of William IV.

During the two years William spent on the Continent visiting Hanover, Brunswick and Osnaburg, he got into innumerable scrapes both over cards and women, though, or perhaps because, his pocket-money allowance was said to be only £100 a year.

This visit caused a great scandal a few years later, for when his brother, Prince Edward, went to Hanover he was attacked by the civil authorities of that country, who demanded that Prince William should conform to their laws and provide for the child of a lady whom he had ruined. Edward wrote to William about this, who told him to disown the whole affair. But Hanover was not to be treated so cavalierly. Mother and child were sent to England to make the demand publicly, and a paragraph appeared in *The Times* detailing the whole affair, but not telling exactly which royal Duke was the culprit. A copy was sent to William, and he at once opened negotiations through his lawyer, Barton, with the lady, and it was finally agreed that the annual sum of £100 should be paid until the child was of age, the Duke defraying all the expenses of their return to Hanover.

Many of the writers concerning royalty at the end of the eighteenth century spoke bitterly of the Royal Marriage Act, as though the sins of the princes arose from the fact that they could not marry any one they chose and when they chose. It is, however, quite certain that some of the brothers, if left in perfect freedom, would not have been content to marry only once,

and some—Prince William, for example—would have had many wives. It is more or less proved that the Prince of Wales married Mrs. Fitzherbert, and there is a story that William married at least once in his youth and left his wife to languish. This story was published in the form of letters by a well-known Leipzig firm in 1880, and the translation of the volume appeared in England through the agency of Messrs Sonnenschein & Allen, entitled *Caroline von Linsingen and William IV.*

There is something very curious about this story, for the names of Caroline's people were truly given, and their home at Luneberg is truly described. Lieutenant-General Wilhelm von Linsingen, the father, was entrusted with the military tuition of Prince Ernest, the Duke of Cumberland, by George III, and Caroline's brother, Ernest von Linsingen, was often at the English Court. From time to time during thirty years the papers announced the meeting of the princes with the General or his son, as in 1812 it was reported that Clarence and the Prince Regent "went down to Ipswich and dined with Baron von Linsingen, who commands the cavalry of the German Legion."

The letters in this book—only vaguely dated—describe the love story, the clandestine marriage and its termination. The editor puts the dates between 1790 and 1792; if he had stated them as being between 1783 and 1785 there might have been some truth in the matter, as William was on the Continent then. But that which really seems to disprove the idea is that the Prince, primitive as he was, could not have written the letters ascribed to him here. And is it possible that the William we know could have been filled with so holy a love for the wife he had married that he would

pass the only two hours he had in her company, in the middle of the night, kneeling arm in arm with her at the bedside, making vows of purity and honour?

Thus, beautifully and Germanically sentimental as is this story, it must be put aside as fiction, in spite of its realism in personages, for the Prince's mind and habits were totally different from those betrayed in the epistles supposed to have been written by him. As Grantley Berkeley says in his reminiscences—

“Oaths were employed in conversation by men of the highest rank even in the presence of ladies. The Prince of Wales and his brothers adopted it! The Duke of Clarence not much more sparingly than the rest. An imprecation commonly began every sentence, the Lord's name was taken in vain, and the speaker's own soul sometimes consigned to perdition;” a habit which certainly does not fit in with Caroline's description of her royal husband.

Prince William indulged in many other amorous affairs, notably one with a Portsmouth belle, while he was the talk of the town in 1788 because of a coloured girl he was said to have brought home with him on the *Pegasus* from the West Indies, and who rejoiced in the name of Wowski. Gossip and paragraphists said that she was left in Plymouth, generally on board ship, and *The World* announced on January 8, “The royal sailor is very observant of forms, and whenever any decent person appears Wowski is always kept in the background. On board ship he compares her to a mole—who in sight of anybody goes under immediately.” Other paragraphs asserted that she was playing with a Newfoundland dog when the Prince Regent went to see his brother; that she was struggling with the alphabet and trying to crook a finger over a

pen; and her presence at a drawing-room was satirically discussed.

In 1789 William was created Earl of Munster and Duke of Clarence and St. Andrews, and with this he was given an allowance of £12,000 a year, a table and covers for his own use at St. James's Palace, the number of courses to be limited, and a house at Richmond, which was to be furnished and kept up for him. This latter, often spoken of as the Lodge at Richmond, was Clarence Lodge, in Kewfoot Lane (now called Clarence Street), "on the edge of the old Deer Park," a small Georgian house on the boundary between Kew and Richmond, and quite close to the latter town. The house is still in existence; three or four steps lead up to the narrow door which, as Horace Walpole told the Duchess of Orrery, the Duke locked up himself every night that his servants should not stay out late. In the rooms where Clarence never drank at dinner "but a few glasses of wine" the poorest Richmond folk now herd in their tenement rooms, dirty children gaze from the two windows on either side of the door, and rags of blinds obscure the row of windows above; in its courtyard a tin chapel has found a lodgment, and its gardens are filled with slum cottages. But a century and a quarter ago it was surrounded with a green park, the silver Thames not far away, and the Richmond theatre quite close.

The young Duke had not been long in this abode when, in spite of his careful supervision, it caught fire, and he found that he was responsible not only for restoring the house but replacing the furniture.

Following upon this accident, he took Ivy House, on the river bank above the ferry at Richmond, opposite Cambridge House on the other bank; a pictur-

esque building with two noble columns of ivy-covered bay windows. In this house it is asserted—quite mistakenly—that Dorothy joined him, and the cause of the mistake is a letter of Horace Walpole's to Miss Berry, dated September 4, 1789, in which he says, "The Duke of Clarence has taken Mr. Henry Hobart's house point blank over against Mr. Cambridge's, which will make the good woman of the mansion cross herself piteously, and stretch the throat of the blatant beast at Sudbrook (Lady Greenwich), and of all the other pious matrons *à la ronde*; for H.R.H., to divert loneliness, has brought with him —, who, being still more averse to solitude, declares that any tempter would make even Paradise more agreeable than a constant *tête-à-tête*."

The person who was taken there by him, and whose name was left out of the earlier printed editions of his letters, was a very different person, a girl named Polly Finch, "sprung from the Lord knows whom, and born the Lord knows where," whose qualifications were youth, vivacity and a tolerable share of good looks, with a weak and uncultivated mind. This affair ended in October when he departed again for the West Indies.

In December 1790 the Duke was busy having his apartments in St. James's re-decorated, and *The Gazetteer* commented that he must have taken lessons from the Duke of Queensberry, for he had a door opened in the outer wall of the parlour under his bedroom, which was painted to have the resemblance of bricks, of which door William alone kept the key.

Much has been said to prove that there was no connection between Dorothy and the Duke anterior to the autumn of 1791, and this was perhaps true, yet the Duke was so thoroughly attracted to her—probably by

that personation in the spring of 1790 of Little Pickle —much earlier than this, that it became a matter of public comment.

As early as March 15, 1791, a vulgar caricature was published entitled, "The New Papa Disappointed; with Justice Shallow's attempt to charm the Brutes." This showed the front of Dorothy's house in Somerset Street, with a young man in black, wearing a star on his breast (Richard Ford), dancing, beating a tambourine and calling to an organ-grinder and trumpeter, representing the British Public, to "Come along, my boys, that's your sort; keep it up! I won't commit you now, never fear; it's rare fun, ain't it? and all gratis." To this the organ-grinder replies aside, "Oh, the tremendous Justass Midas! Oh, what a Solomon is Justass Midas!" On the balcony of the house is a doctor, holding a dead baby, marked with a star on its breast, and shouting, "D—— your noise, Rascalls, you'll disturb Mrs. Pickle, who has just made a *faux* couch of a young sea-gull."

The Duke of Clarence, in the garb of a buxom nurse, leans on the balcony rail, and from the doorway below an old woman looks up at them, murmuring "Bless the baby, how like its daddy! what a pity it should be a slink!"¹ Aye, marry, and marked with a star."

That this picture should have been published early in 1791 proves that scandal was then busy with Dorothy's name, probably quite unjustly; it also indicates that the fourth Ford child was still-born, an event which must have taken place in February, as Dorothy was acting on March the 17th, on the 25th, and through April.

¹ A term for a cast calf.

There had been a curious incident on December 22, 1790, when for her benefit Dorothy acted Celia, who was the mistress of the King's son in *The Greek Slave*, an incident which Boaden declares was but coincidence. For this play, adapted from Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Humorous Lieutenant*, Harry Bunbury wrote an epilogue which Dorothy had to declaim, part of which ran as follows—

“How strange methinks I hear a critic say,
 What! she—the serious heroine of the play!
 The manager his want of sense evinces,
 To pitch on hoydens for the love of princes,
 To trick out chambermaids in awkward pomp,—
 Horrid! to make a princess of a *Romp*.
 ‘Depend upon’t,’ replies indulgent John,
 ‘Some damn’d good-natured friend has set her on.’
 ‘Pugh!’ says old Surly, ‘I shall not expect
 To see Jack Pudding treated with respect;
 Cobblers in curricles alarm the Strand,
 Or my Lord Chancellor drive six-in-hand.
 But I’ve a precedent—can quote the book—
 Czar Peter made an empress of a cook.’”

This epilogue was published in *The Bon Ton Magazine* the next month, but was not connected with the name of the Duke of Clarence, and it is almost a proof that there was nothing serious between the Duke and Dorothy then that that scandal-loving magazine did not begin to comment on this subject until August 1791, when it announced, “The Duke of Clarence’s penchant for a certain celebrated actress, notwithstanding what report says, has proved unsuccessful. The fact is, the Ford is too dangerous for him to cross the Jordan.”

It is also a remarkable thing that the promoters of this paper should not have heard the whispers which prompted the publication on March 15 of the caricature described above.

The Bon Ton Magazine declared of *The Greek*

Slave that the alterations of the play were made by Dorothy herself, "done with no uncommon felicity," and that so great was the enthusiasm on her benefit that nine crowded rows of the pit were laid in the boxes, and the house was overflowing in every part—this though Mrs. Siddons had acted the night before, and there was an opera at the Haymarket.

Matters had, however, come to a sore point between Dorothy and Ford; she demanded with more insistence that he should give her a legal position, and Ford was torn two ways, his ambition dragged him the one and his love of ease and fatherly affection the other. The first would not allow him to do what Dorothy wished, the latter made him intensely jealous and determined to hold what he had got. During the spring he shadowed Dorothy wherever she went, saw her to the theatre, remained in the Green Room and saw her home. "Dick Ford, ever a dramatic *amateur*, has lately paid particular attention to the acting of Mrs. Jordan." He ostentatiously handed her about at Richmond as Mrs. Ford, causing Horace Walpole to take the marriage seriously, writing in September: "Do you know that Mrs. Jordan is acknowledged to be Mrs. Ford?" adding "but she does not quit the stage."

Ford watched her through her engagement at Richmond, and went on that disastrous visit to Yorkshire with her, she being billed as Mrs. Ford, and there can be little doubt that the unevenness of her temper while there had some association with the trouble between them.

That remark of Horace Walpole's must indicate the very last standpoint that Dorothy made before she cast the whole Ford incident away. She was not actuated by love for the Prince; the one love of her life

was given to her children, and she hungered also to give them a legitimate father. The shame of illegitimacy had hung over her from her baby days : in her youth she had writhed under the scorn of her father's people, who could accept the erring man with open arms, but condemn the erring woman and the innocent children of both. In her youth, too, she had been forced by a scoundrel to bear an illegitimate child, and now again a weak and stubborn man was proving the falseness of his character and giving illegitimacy to her other children. She knew that if Richard Ford married there was no law to make him support his children by her; he could turn his back on them, leaving them to die of starvation and be no worse, except for the sentimental opinion of some foolish people brought into the world before their time. It was for the children that she fought, for them she begged that at last, after five years, he would redeem that solemn promise upon which he had won her. But in spite of his jealousy, in spite of his desire to keep his place in town and his place at Richmond, and to share the carriage supplied by Dorothy's money, in spite of all he would not marry; the furthest he would go was to say to every one, "This is my wife!"

For Dorothy's purpose this was no good. Ford might swear through thick and thin that she was his, but without the legal ceremony he could leave her at any moment, feeling no moral responsibility for the children.

She took counsel with her friends, among whom was Lady Francis Lumm, and probably her father's brother, the second Nathaniel Bland, then living in London. The author of *The Great Illegitimates* says that often at the house of Lady Lumm the conversa-

tion would turn upon the wooing of the Duke of Clarence, and that these conversations would end with Lady Lumm's uniform observation, "I shall again this evening instil into her mind the absolute necessity of *sticking* to Mr. Ford, for I am well convinced that no good will accrue from the princely association." The author continues, "This advice her ladyship never failed to inculcate, making our actress take her seat by her at the card-table, when she would at intervals, in a half-whisper, repeat the counsel alluded to."

But Dorothy demanded an honourable return for her fidelity, and that Ford would not give. The Prince was ready to promise all he could—indeed, all she asked, and to fix his promise upon parchment with the aid of lawyers. However long Dorothy looked at the situation she could but see that the Prince's offer was better than Ford's demand to take all and give nothing; than his sullen assertion that things could go on as they were. She knew that they could not go on as they were, for the relations between them were terribly strained, and so at last, it is said, she gave her ultimatum. Within so many days Ford was to ratify his promise, or she would be at liberty to do as she thought fit.

Ford followed his former tactics of letting things slide, and found that he had let them slide once too often. It is odd that, behaving as he did, he yet seemed to be angry and sore at Dorothy's desertion, and anxious to pose as an injured man.

Horace Walpole followed his September letter with one dated October 16, 1791, saying that—

"Mrs. Jordan, whom Mr. Ford had declared his wife and presented as such to some ladies at Richmond, has resumed her former name, and is said to be much

at a *principal* villa at Petersham, which I do not affirm — far be it from me to vouch a quarter of what I hear."

Clarence had, perhaps with some such arrangement in his mind, bought Petersham Lodge in 1790, giving £12,000 for it, which, it was said, his father helped him to pay. It was on the edge of Richmond Park, about a mile beyond the town.

The London theatrical season began in the middle of September, and *The Bon Ton Magazine* of October and many other papers abounded in paragraphs upon the association of the Duke and the actress, which showed that negotiations had been going on a considerable time. In November *The Bon Ton* gave a frontispiece of Clarence and Dorothy, he kneeling upon one knee, she sitting upon the other, her arm round his neck and his arm round her waist, he fanning her, she smiling at him. Little Pickle, the accompanying text declares, "studied no arts to attract the Prince, who only received her smiles and jokes in common with others. She was attached in friendship and affection to the father of her children, and was resolved to resist her royal suitor, but he opened his campaign with so much energy, and at the same time in a manner so gentle and noble, that she soon yielded to his arms and arguments; but such are the conditions of her submission that, should he at any time forget or break the bond of union, she would be in a much more formidable and independent state than ever." It further said that, as she gave no answer to several letters of love and generosity, the Prince determined upon a personal assault, and, by the aid of her servant, contrived one night after the play to obtain access to her apartments.

How and when the affair was arranged, Richard

Ford made much trouble over it. He was a lawyer, and the knowledge of the letter of the law seems often to cripple the power of deciding simple questions of right or wrong. That Dorothy should attempt to bind him was unbearable, but it was also an infamous thing that she should consider herself free of bond to him. His friends and relatives took his part, and inspired spiteful paragraphs concerning Dorothy's deserted children, and her wantonness in preferring a royal lover to sweet, respectable but precarious domestic bliss. As Boaden remarks, these people knew nothing of Ford's privity to the advances made by the Duke: "They had never seen him at the wing of the theatre, and thrown their eyes up, as he must have done, to the private boxes." It is not unlikely that Ford had his price, for some time later he was in possession of Drury Lane shares, and, on the definite formation of the police magistracy in 1792, he was given the Court of Shadwell, and also became Under Secretary of State.

It was not until the year 1800 that he was moved from Shadwell to Bow, which gave him priority over all the other police magistrates, and on the 16th of December, 1801, he was knighted. "Thus," says Watkins, author of the *Life of William IV*, "without any merit of his own, he obtained a fortune and a title." It is doubtful whether his later honours had anything to do with Dorothy or the Duke, for all the magistrates of that time, with the exception of two, were knighted.

He certainly after the event got the credit of selling Dorothy, more, perhaps, because he and his friends became so clamorously angry than because there was proof of it. On the other hand, he and his friends were able to inspire many paragraphs against Mrs.

Jordan, the general cry being that she was cruelly and unnaturally deserting her children for grandeur.

Thus said *The Bon Ton Magazine*: “To be mistress of the King’s son Little Pickle thinks respectable, and so away go all tender ties to children. Ecod! she says she will now be company for some of your royal Duchesses, as others in her royal line are !”

It was, however, known in the autumn of 1791 that the Duke had been paying his suit for months, that Ford had persistently refused to marry Dorothy, and that he knew all that was going on. So when, the matter being completed, a dead set was made against Dorothy by his friends in the theatre and out, the blame of it, after the first excitement, was ascribed to Ford.

So great an impression was made by this onslaught on the part of Ford that even after his death one biographer, unaware that he was no longer living, accused him of engineering a furious attack upon Dorothy in 1809.

She seems to have known her man and anticipated something of the sort, for she secured two exonerating notes from him when the agreement was made among the three of them, and, with the first rise of public blame, sent copies of these to the papers.

MR. FORD’s letter to MRS. JORDAN :

“Lest any insinuations be circulated to the prejudice of Mrs. Jordan in respect to her having behaved improperly towards her children in regard to pecuniary matters, I hereby declare that her conduct in this particular has been as laudable, generous and as like a fond mother as in her present situation it was possible to be. She has indeed given up for their use

every sixpence she has been able to save from her theatrical profits, she has also engaged herself to allow them £550 per annum, and at the same time settled £50 a year on her sister. It is but bare justice to her for me to assert this, as the father of those children.

“Signed,

“RICHARD FORD.

“October 13, 1791.”

“TO MRS. JORDAN:

“In gratitude for the care Mrs. Jordan has ever bestowed on my children, it is my consent and wish that she, whenever she pleases, see and be with them, provided her visits are not attended by any circumstances which may be improper to them or unpleasant to me.

“RICHARD FORD.”

Ford did not deny that these letters were written by him, but he did make a protest in *The Morning Post* that they were published without his knowledge or consent. At first, perhaps, he intended to stick to his share of the bargain, for he decided to go on a visit to France, and crossed, curiously enough, with the writer of *The Great Illegitimates*—then only a youth—and his father, who says that Ford was in no amiable frame of mind, for those friends to whom he had introduced Dorothy as his wedded wife had been demanding explanations.

Two or three years later Ford married a Miss Booth, an amateur artist of great ability, whose father was known as a connoisseur and collector of pictures. To them three children were born, the eldest being the Richard Ford who won fame as a writer upon Spain. To Sir Richard Ford is ascribed the introduction of mounted police in London.

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCE

“As Jordan’s high and mighty squire
Her play-house profit deigns to skim,
Some folks audaciously inquire
If he keeps her or she keeps him.”

PETER PINDAR, Junr.

“Though always a mistress she has always acted up to the rigid principles and economy of a wife. She has never been lavish of her favours, but ever true and constant to the man she has lived with.”—
ANONYMOUS.

AMONG those who now joined hands with Ford and became, therefore, his close friends, were some of those actresses who had been jealous of Dorothy’s position, one, unnamed, being reported as particularly active. She was said to be more beautiful, but less successful than Dorothy, to be living in open adultery and to be jealous not only of her acting, but of her conquest of royalty, she having failed to bind one of the royal princes to herself. Further she had much influence with the press, and later historians accused her of the drink habit. This could only have been Mrs. Crouch, who separated from her husband because of her transient connection with the Prince of Wales; who lived with Kelly the actor; who, though better looking than Dorothy, was distinctly second to her in her art, yet always desirous of taking her place; who gave luxurious parties to which she invited all who might serve her, and who suffered severely from curious falls and accidents, which her friends deplored as misfortunes, but her enemies regarded as retribution for a bad habit.

This actress inspired many of the ill-natured paragraphs which appeared, and did her best to pave the way for her own pre-eminence by playing upon the sentimentality of the British public. Taken as a whole this public loves to be flattered, to be told that it is honest, sincere and moral, and as such cannot countenance anything base. So it was made to believe that their Thalia was a wicked mother, who would sell not only herself, body and soul for a thousand a year, but her children. Thus the people were fired to a point where they only waited opportunity to visit their virtuous wrath on Dorothy's head. *The Great Illegitimates* declares that this actress even went to the length of writing letters to the Duke with the hope—which was unavailing—of prejudicing him against Dorothy.

But before the affair came to its height the agreement between Dorothy and the Duke was made and signed, there being diverse reports concerning it, the general assertion being that she was given an allowance of £1000 or £1200 a year, with an additional £500 a year if the Duke left her. Upon this some one started the cry of mercenary, of immoral barter, and the booby public—in reality excited and pleased at the royal favour showered upon its favourite actress—at once took the bait, and joined in the cry, the paragraphs flying from column to column and ringing through every newspaper sheet in London. *The Morning Chronicle* remained her friend, and went to the other extreme in the following note on November 29, 1791—

“Among the ungenerous attempts which have been made to lower Mrs. Jordan in the public estimation,

may be ranked the information that she has made a *mercenary* agreement with her present protector. . . . Although she has settled half her future income from her profession and *all* that she has saved in it upon her children, she has absolutely rejected every idea of settlement or pecuniary aid herself. Her independence is in her talents, the unrivalled excellence of which is evidently the cause of so much unmanly scurrility having lately appeared against her." But the *Chronicle* protested too much, for undoubtedly a settlement was made.

During this autumn another member of the Bland family came to London to qualify for the bar, a cousin of Dorothy's, son of that James Bland who had been given the possession of Derryquin Castle. This young man went to see his uncle Nathaniel, younger brother of Francis Bland, and there he heard a version of the transaction which was probably true. For Nathaniel, Dorothy's uncle, had, as has been said, been kind to his brother's deserted children, and had done his best for young Francis, the eldest son, who it will be seen from the following extracts had not repaid his care.

The long letter from which this quotation is made was written from the Temple Coffee House, Devereux Court, on November 12, 1791, to his father by Francis Christopher Bland, subsequently the grandfather of Mr. J. Franklin Fuller of Dublin, to whom I owe so much information about the family:

"I have seen my Uncle Nathaniel, who received me very cordially, gave me a good dinner, and, I think, a hearty welcome. He said he would now call me Frank, as he had for the second and last time dis-

carded the other Frank, who has again behaved very ill to him. Mrs. Jordan is now kept by the Duke of Clarence, from whom she received £3000 upon the nail and a settlement of £1000 a year, which, if the Prince was to leave her to-morrow, he cannot take away from her. I think, with this and thirty guineas a week, her theatrical salary, she may very well provide for the cashier'd Captain. Sir Francis (Lumm) is not yet arrived in Argyle Street. . . . Lady Lumm is very bad, and is obliged to be drawn about from one room to another in an arm-chair."

As Dorothy was probably in touch with this uncle of hers, the actual fact of what the settlement was may have been made known to him by her. It must be agreed that if a settlement was considered necessary when a legal marriage took place, it was even more necessary in such circumstances as Dorothy's, and that she was right to take what steps she could to guard herself.

This is the only mention I have found of £3000 down, and from a curious piece of evidence given by the *Gazetteer* of November 28 it seems to be a fact that she did receive a sum of money at this time. The paragraph was headed—

“LITTLE PICKLE IN DISTRESS

“If there were not something more fanciful than commendable in the distress of any person so situated as this lady, we should not be found to introduce the topic, but as it is, it may as well be given.

“Only eleven days ago Little Pickle was, as she called it, in *great distress*. She wanted £300, and this being refused by the person from whom she

expected it, she determined to raise it peremptorily by the sale of her furniture. A broker and his clerk were employed two days in appraising; then she came to town, said her distress was over, and gave them a £10 note to go and laugh at it, as she said."

Thus while out of town she had secured a sum of money from which to relieve herself of trouble.

Some time between 1789 and 1791—the old biographers were very loose about dates—Dorothy is said to have received a substantial addition to her income "by the death of a near relative to her mother," which, together with her theatrical emolument, brought her income up to £3000 per annum (*Secret History of the Green Room*). This legacy is said by most writers to have been antecedent to her connection with the Duke, but it is never further explained. It is not easy now at a distance of a hundred and twenty-five years to say from whom it came, but it may have been from her aunt, Blanch Scuddamore Philipps, otherwise Mrs. Williams, who died in 1788, at the age of sixty-eight years. She was well-to-do, and may have left the niece, who was burdened with so many family responsibilities, something to help her discharge them.

In the letter by Francis Christopher Bland, the cashiered captain, the other Frank mentioned, is Dorothy's eldest brother, who had been helped by his father's brother Nathaniel, and who had evidently more than once repaid his care with ingratitude, as well as spoilt his own chances professionally.

The new connection with the Duke meant the readjustment of domestic affairs. Though Ford had written of Dorothy going to see his children, there is no evidence that he retained, nor that she was

separated from, them; and when the place at Richmond was discontinued, it was necessary to find them another home; and this may explain the remarks in the papers, which raised some curiosity, announcing that "little Pickle" and the Duke were several times seen walking westward in the afternoon. It was the *Gazetteer* which discovered the reason for this, and informed the world that the lady had taken a house at Brompton, "not in the Row, but in the town, which is more private." Here it is very probable that the children lived for a short time, but a year or so later a little house was taken for them on Ham Common, causing a wag to say that thenceforth it would be known as Doll Common.

The great public excitement over Mrs. Jordan took place, not in Old Drury Lane, but in what up to that time had been called the Opera House, and then was known as the King's Theatre, Haymarket. For it had been decided that Old Drury was not sufficiently large or up-to-date, and that therefore it must give place to a more commodious building. Its demolition began in the summer of 1791, and the winter term was opened in the Haymarket, September 22, with a farcical prelude written for the occasion, and named *Poor Old Drury; The Haunted Tower and The Panel*, in which Dorothy acted Beatrice.

From that date Dorothy played with great vigour, and Boaden says that no other great actress laboured as she did; she played twenty-four nights in two months, and very frequently two parts in one night; then, if there were no other attraction, she would be put up for three nights running. He comments upon this, that if, in such a course of duty, indisposition

sometimes caused an apology to be made, there was obviously a reasonable ground for it without resorting to caprice or blaming her private engagements. But he adds that it began to be whispered that she was able to play if she chose, or that if she was not very well she was not confined to her room, and if she could get out at all she ought to be acting.

Twenty-four nights in two months may not seem a heavy task to-day, but there was more strain when the piece was changed every evening, and also Dorothy sometimes took two heavy parts in one night. At this period, however, all her parts were old and well worn, which Dorothy considered unfair, for she knew that a new play might mean a new success, and if it did not make her more popular, it would tend to brighten up the lustre which was around her name.

At the end of November *Richard Cœur de Lion* was on the boards, and when the audience assembled to see this favourite play on Saturday the 26th the management announced that, as Mrs. Jordan had been taken violently and alarmingly ill, the play would be changed to *High Life below Stairs*.

The audience had evidently been waiting for some announcement of this sort to give an opening for a demonstration, for instantly an extraordinary clamour arose. The people stamped, bawled, groaned and shouted—

“Return the money!”

“Why did you not put a notice on the doors?”

“Mrs. Crouch! we will only have Mrs. Crouch! with her there is no occasion to lament the absence of Mrs. Jordan.”

So declared the *Gazetteer*, and other papers not

only reported the disturbance joyfully, but added their share of criticism; "papers over which the Bacchante above alluded to possessed great influence, railed at Mrs. Jordan with the most unmerciful abuse; truth and falsehood were brought forward with the same readiness to stigmatize her," etc.

So on the night of the 26th the audience were given their will, and Mrs. Crouch—who was quite ready for the situation—took the part of Matilda, another actress taking her character. After the second performance of this part by her it was reported that when she appeared she was received with seven or eight distinct general and long plaudits. "They are the decrees of the public that Mrs. Jordan shall have that part no more, whether it is held by Mrs. Crouch or any other person. One good we may venture to predict from the conduct of the audience, that there will be fewer *illnesses* this season at either theatre than can be remembered at any other." *The Public Advertiser* joined in the howl with—

"Amidst the clamour on Saturday night 'No Jordan' was distinct. An English audience, merely because a performer in a very narrow cast of parts has been successful, are not to be insulted. Mrs. Jordan may rest assured, notwithstanding *nature* has well formed her for certain characters—for her *art* in acting is very trifling—she can be better spared from the stage than many who give themselves less consequence."

From Mrs. Crouch the paragraph writers turned to Mrs. Goodall, who took Lydia Languish's part during the next week, and congratulated themselves and the world that this elegant play had been relieved from the boisterous vulgarity with which it had been de-

formed, and that the acting of Miss Farren and Palmer seemed to be improved by the superior performance of Lydia.

The Morning Chronicle told the public that with the utmost authority it could state that Mrs. Jordan had suffered from severe indisposition, having been bled on Sunday morning by Dr. Keate and still being much indisposed. But for a whole week the audience condemned her, and shouted for Mrs. Crouch, probably enjoying the fun, until Mrs. Crouch's prettiness and daintiness failed to keep flowing the magnetism with which Dorothy seemed to inspire her characters.

That which added fuel to the fire and kept anger alive was the fact that early on the Sunday evening she was seen to leave the house in a carriage with the Duke of Clarence, and the following note from the *Gazetteer*, which at this period made a cult of reporting Mrs. Jordan, always taking the double duty of instructing and reflecting the public mind and often with mischievous intent, is worth recording—

“ And it is now with great pleasure that we inform Mrs. Jordan’s admirers, who may have been uneasy on her account, that yesterday she set off in a post-chaise and four, from her house in Somerset Street, with the Most High and Most Puissant Prince His Royal Highness William Henry, Duke of Clarence in England and St. Andrew’s in Scotland, Earl of Munster in Ireland, an Admiral of the Royal Navy, K.G. and K.T., for his seat at Petersham.”

If Mrs. Jordan had gone away on the Saturday it might have been definitely judged that the illness was an excuse only; but as she remained in Somerset Street and was attended by a doctor that day and Sunday, it was probably a reality, though had she known how

seriously it would have been taken she might have made an effort to go through with her work.

Some of these papers had in September declared that Mrs. Jordan was again in a fair way to increase the population, and the two historians upon the life of King William, the Rev. Dr. John Watkins and the Rev. William Wright,¹ attribute her illness on the night of September 26 as due to a confinement. This was scarcely possible, though it might have been due to another miscarriage.

Certainly on the Monday, perhaps on the Sunday, Dorothy would have learned of the row at the theatre, and have rightly judged that it would be useless for her to return to the stage for some days, for a theatre mob was like a beast of prey, ready to tear its greatest favourite equally with its most hated bore. Thus for a space Mrs. Crouch sat on a pedestal and hugged herself with triumph, hoping that at last she had managed to sweep from her path the one person who seemed able always to put her in the second place.

In spite of her banishment from London, Dorothy did not sit and mourn; rather did she amuse herself in the country, taking part, among other entertainments, in a gathering given by the Duke to his Richmond friends, November 30. Clarence may truly have been said to be wanting in tact, for during this month he had promised to go to a party given by a Mrs. Bouverie, and with the utmost coolness he asked whether he might bring a lady with him. To this Mrs. Bouverie answered that any lady he wished to introduce would be welcome. When the evening arrived who should accompany him but "Mrs. Pickle,"

¹ As these two histories are identical, save for later news in one concerning the King, the Rev. William Wright was probably but a pseudonym for Watkins, in order to give an old book a new lease of life.

hitherto accepted in that house as Mrs. Ford. The ladies present said nothing, Mrs. Jordan was very entertaining, sang a number of droll songs, told a few stories, and Mrs. Bouverie did not mention Mrs. Ford!

There was probably much consultation in the Petersham Lodge circle over the serious theatrical situation, for the Duke had no idea of Dorothy's remaining idle; so during the week succeeding the fiasco of the Saturday the following letter was sent out to the papers, addressed from the Drury Lane Treasury Office—

“SIR,

“I have submitted in silence to the unprovoked and unmanly abuse which for some time past has been directed upon me, because it has related to subjects about which the public could not be interested; but to an attack upon my conduct in my profession, and on the charge of want of gratitude and respect to the public, I think it is my duty to reply. Nothing can be more cruel or unfounded than the information that I absented myself from the theatre on Saturday last from any other cause than real inability from illness to sustain my part in the entertainment. I have ever been ready and proud to exert myself to the utmost of my strength to fulfil my engagements with the theatre and to manifest my respect for the audience, and no person can be more grateful for the indulgence and applause with which I have been constantly honoured. I would not intrude upon the public an allusion to anything that does not relate to my profession, in which alone I may without presumption say I am accountable to them; but thus called on in the present instance there can be no impropriety in

my answering *those* who have so ingeniously attacked me, that if they could drive me from that profession they would take from me the only income I have or mean to possess; the whole earning of which upon the past and one half for the future I have already settled upon my children. Unjustly and cruelly traduced as I have been upon this subject, I trust that this short declaration will not be deemed impertinent, and for the rest I appeal with confidence to the justice and generosity of the public.

“Yours, etc.,

“D. JORDAN.”

The response to this in the form of an open letter was published on December 3 by those papers which, having condemned, were not too virulent to retract.

“TO MRS. JORDAN.

“MADAM,

“As your very sensible and feeling appeal to the public must have completely done away any momentary unfavourable impression that might have been made by the industrious malice that has so long, and so laboriously been exercised at your expense—if any impression has been made, which I by no means admit to have been the case, except in the contempt that has been excited against its authors—justice requires that you should immediately recommence your theatrical exertions, and in the applause that you will receive exact the severest retribution from your base and dastardly libellers.

“AN ADMIRER OF REAL MERIT.”

This was turning the tables with some complete-

ness, but it was not until a week had passed that an announcement of Dorothy's reappearance was made, and *The Morning Chronicle* of December 10 added the paragraph : "Mrs. Jordan is particularly prohibited from singing by her physician, because the exertion will renew the spitting of blood."

Dorothy appeared that night, and every means was taken by herself and her friends to ensure a good reception. The Prince of Wales, with Col. St. Leger, Count Belsance and Major Hanger were in one box, the Duchess of Gloucester with her son, Prince William, was in another, and many other interested friends to the Duke were in different parts of the house. The Duke of Clarence himself stood behind the scenes on the King's side of the house, and received Mrs. Jordan when she left the stage, handing her into her carriage at the end.

The crush outside the theatre at the beginning was so great that several hundreds were unable to get in, and Mrs. Jordan's first appearance on the stage was welcomed with reiterated shouts of applause, though a few unreconcilables hissed. The tumult subsiding, she came forward, and in a voice clear enough to penetrate every part of the house, said—

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I should consider myself as totally unworthy of the distinct favour and approbation I have ever received from you if the smallest mark of your displeasure did not sensibly afflict me. Give me leave to assure you that I never absented myself from the theatre but when compelled to it by real indisposition. Ever since I have had the honour and happiness of appearing before you, it has been my pride, my unremitting study to endeavour to entertain and amuse

you, and I trust I may while so employed consider myself as under your protection."

Boaden, who was present in the theatre that night, owns that he thoroughly enjoyed it, adding his criticism that: "While making the protest on the stage her manner was extremely good; the little hardship that sat upon her brow, and, like a cloud, kept back the comic smile that but waited their cheer to burst forth, the graceful obeisance that followed her complete triumph (for it was complete), and the mode in which she resumed her task to delight, after she had personally suffered pain—were all inimitable."

Of this event *The Great Illegitimates* grandiloquently said: "Such is the creature doomed to encounter the shafts of some despicable wretch, who from personal hatred, or more probably suborned to do the work of a hidden assassin of character (meaning Richard Ford), embodies his venom in the filthy columns of the most venal of prints, thus attempting to stab a reputation too permanently established in the good opinion of the public."

These "most venal of prints" now proceeded to congratulate the public on retaining a charming actress who would no doubt long continue to deserve their kindness, and who had certainly suffered much more than could be deserved even if the suspicions relative to her had not been sufficiently removed.

So ended this exciting episode, though the hints that she intended to retire from the stage were kept alive by her enemies.

But if Dorothy's faults were allowed to be buried for a time, those of the Duke of Clarence were well canvassed; if Dorothy was accused of sharing his establishment from mercenary motives alone, the

Duke was charged with a mercenariness which was far meaner. *The Bon Ton* and many other periodicals asserted that he was so short of money that he collected Mrs. Jordan's salary in person, and even took it in advance on the night of the performance. As early as November 3 it was reported at the end of a paragraph that: "We have only to add that as *Banker* to *Her Highness* he actually received her *week's salary* from the *Treasurer* on Saturday last!" Ten days later Peter Pindar, Jun., gave to the laughing gossips the verse which heads this chapter. Other gibes followed, one paper going so far as to say that the Duke forebade Dorothy to appear unless the money were first paid.

In the middle of December a caricature was published, entitled "Saturday Morning," or the "Theatrical Pay-day," in which the theatrical manager stands on one side of a counter and the Duke on the other, the former bowing, and saying: "We understand as much—you are welcome each week and we wish you a good Benefit with your bargain." The latter murmurs, while sweeping a lot of gold coins into an earthenware vase: "My precious eyes and limbs, this belongs to the Jordan, but it is mine," etc.

Punch declared years later that the Duke of Clarence was often behind the scenes in Drury Lane Theatre, adding, "indeed, it is said that the royal autograph is extant in the Saturday Treasury book for Mrs. Jordan's salary."

Unfortunately that Treasury volume has since disappeared from the world of books that are no books.

The caricaturists were extremely active over the royal love affair, and skits of all sorts were published, some shocking in their vulgarity, all more or less

coarse. December 2, 1791, saw one issued giving a picture of the stage, Dorothy looking horribly ill sitting on the Duke's knee, and he offering her a glass of gin.

"Indeed, indeed, I am indisposed, upon my honour," she is saying, to which the Duke replies—

"My poor, dear little Pickle. — the lubbers, I wish I had them lashed fast to the main rigging, I'd give them a dozen a-piece."

Earlier than this Dorothy had been shown as standing before a mirror, dressed in purple and wearing a duchess's coronet. "Oh, Gemini," she is saying, "is that gay, fine thing me? If it is, and the glass be true, I am no less than my Lady Duchess!"

From that time the title of duchess was flung at her in and out of season, her brother George coming in for a share of the compliments in such paragraphs as: "Interest is making to have Bland the actor knighted; it is so awkward to have the brother of a Duchess a plain Mister. The title he solicits is Sir Simpleton Squeekum." Or: "Little Bland's husband has lately added to the family escutcheon the *arms of a prince*, and he triumphantly bears it about with him on every occasion."

Years later, when Dorothy was cast for the part of Sir Edward Bloomly in Fred Reynolds's comedy of *Cheap Living*, and she was inclined to resent it, for she was then a-weary of breeches parts and of playing the dissipated youth, the irritated manager Wroughton said—

"Why, you are grand, madam, quite the duchess again this morning!"

"Very likely," replied Dorothy, "for you are not the first person this very day who has condescended to honour me with the title."

Then, without the slightest pique and with all her characteristic humour, she told how, having to discharge her Irish cook for impertinence, when she paid her the wages due the woman showed her a shilling, and banging it down on the table, cried—

“Arrah, me honey, with this thirteener won’t I sit in the gallery? and won’t your Grace give me a curtsy? and won’t I give your Royal Highness a howl and a hiss into the bargain?”

A picture, drawn by Gillray and given to the grinning public on October 24, was called “The Devil to Pay: the Wife Metamorphosed, or Neptune Reposing,” in which the Prince is shown asleep, but Dorothy is sitting up in bed, and saying in bewilderment: “What pleasant dreams I have had to-night! Methought I was in Paradise upon a bed of violets and roses. Ha! bless me! where am I now? Am I in a bed? The sheets are sarcent sure, no linen ever was so fine. What a gay silken robe have I got? Oh, heaven! I dream. Yet if this be a dream I would not wish to wake again. Sure I died last night and went to heaven!” Some of the letterpress upon this is too coarse to be repeated in full, and the plate itself was one of a number rigidly suppressed.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, poor woman—a separation had just been arranged between her and the Prince of Wales because of his marriage—had never any kindness for Dorothy. Their cases were so similar in spite of the marriage ceremony, which she knew to be illegal, that Mrs. Fitzherbert, clinging as she did to social station, could not afford to be friendly. The cartoonists fastened upon this in such pictures as “The Pot calling the Kettle Black,” which showed the buxom Mrs. Fitzherbert, wearing a blue

ribbon with *Ich Dien* worked upon it in her hair, turning her back upon Dorothy, and asking how she dares to enter her presence, or to think that *she* would keep company with such a pickle. "Pray, sir," she continues to the Duke, "keep your creature out of my sight, I am an honest woman, I am."

Dorothy responds in like manner, pointing out that if Mrs. Fitzherbert has as many thousands as she has hundreds (the former was accredited with obtaining £10,000 a year), then she was the worse of the two. Clarence says apologetically to the Prince: "Why, you know, George, we leaped the broom as well as you, and though you palavered a good deal to quiet the lady's conscience, I did it with less ceremony, that's all."

Another suppressed plate was of the Duke of Clarence running, with broken china tied to his coat-tails, Mrs. Fitzherbert and other women following and scolding him, while the Duke utters unrepeatable language.

Another skit, "A Virtuous Flame," represented the Duke of York and his bride passing before a house, at the window of which sit Clarence and Mrs. Jordan, she in the least covering of garments; and a further jeer at the royal family was entitled "Vices Overlooked at the New Proclamation." In this the Queen, hugging bags marked £3,000,000, sits at a table opposite the King, whose money bags contain £5,000,000, denoting avarice; drunkenness is exemplified by the Prince of Wales being led home by watchmen, gambling by the Duke of York at cards, and debauchery by Clarence and Mrs. Jordan embracing.

By the end of December Ford had returned to

England, and he joined the band of Dorothy's enemies, attending Mrs. Crouch's revels and going there to little suppers after the play. He also recommenced his visits behind the stage and to the Green Room, and probably was not above making himself obnoxious to the woman whom he had, morally, deserted. If the papers are to be trusted the Duke asked Sheridan to forbid Ford's entry behind the scenes, for the following was published by one of the morning journals on December 13—

“The naval officer, who too often infests the scenes of the Haymarket to the annoyance of every one who belongs to the house, *but one*, had the modesty the other day to desire Mr. Sheridan to forbid Mr. Ford the privilege of appearing behind the scenes. Mr. Sheridan very properly told the naval officer that Mr. Ford's behaviour as a *gentleman* precluded such a prohibition, and that in *point of right* Mr. Ford had as much pretension as (Mr. Sheridan) himself.”

That this left-handed alliance provoked much curiosity and no displeasure at Court is proved by the fact that the King and Queen went to the theatre on the 4th of January, 1792. Since the King's illness they had shunned Drury Lane, for they hated Sheridan as one who encouraged the Prince of Wales in his assumption of power, but their interest was too keen for resistance; so we find the King and Queen occupying a box “at a distance of three from the stage,” where it was easier to see every corner than from the stage box; six of the Princesses were in the box on the left of their parents, the Duke and the Duchess of York and the Duke of Clarence being in a box exactly opposite. “Their Majesties' gratification

broke forth in the most rapturous of expressions," said *The Advertiser*.

A bad accident, however, preceded this performance, for the public's anxiety to see how their sovereign would look upon Mrs. Jordan had brought overwhelming crowds, and the Royal Theatre, Haymarket, was a place of narrow passages and steep steps. One man was trampled to death, and one woman terribly injured in the struggle to get down the stairs to the pit. This was, however, hidden from the royal visitors.

The oft-repeated story of the King's comment on his son's new domesticity may or may not be true, but it is certainly characteristic of George's love of economy.

"Clarence! Clarence! how's this? You—you keep an actress—keep an actress!"

"Yes, Sire."

"Ah! how much d'ye give her, eh?"

"A thousand a year, Sire."

"A thousand too much, too much! Five hundred."

Some wag later added that the Duke wrote to Dorothy (there was really no need for him to *write*) and repeated the parental dictum, and that she, tearing off the bottom of a play-bill upon which was printed "No money returned after the raising of the curtain!" enclosed it in an envelope to him.

Dorothy Jordan was quite outspoken, and she was not a fine lady, but she had much of good sense, which would have condemned such a vulgarity. Also I find that the usual announcement at the bottom of a London play-bill was simply, "No money to be returned!" Thus, in any case, the latter part of the sentence must be regarded as embroidery.

CHAPTER XI

DOMESTICITY AND WORK

“Need any bard despair,
If Jordan serve and Bannister be there?”

“Mrs. Jordan, delightful Mrs. Jordan, whose voice did away the cares of the whole house, before they saw her come in.”—LEIGH HUNT.

DOROTHY JORDAN was not exempt from a certain vanity which expresses itself in all ages, that of having her portrait painted, and there are an extraordinary number of her portraits still in existence, though our National Portrait Gallery does not possess one. She was represented as Nell, Peggy, Priscilla Tomboy, Hypolita, Lucy, Fidelia, Phædra, Isabel, Matilda, Rosalind, with Falstaff, and as the Comic Muse. Among the artists were Romney, who painted six pictures of her; Hoppner, who painted three, his Mrs. Jordan as Hypolita being judged by some critics as his masterpiece; Gainsborough, Morland, W. A. Chalmers and others.

One of the earliest portraits painted of Dorothy was that now known as *The Country Girl*, by Romney, her first sitting for this being on November 17, 1786.¹ Twelve times between that date and January 15, 1787, did she go to Romney’s studio, always between one and two in the day, her address being at that time 5 Gower Street. Concerning the pose of this picture a note given from Sir Henry Russell’s MS. presents her characteristically—

¹ Romney, by Humphry Ward and W. Roberts.

"I recollect hearing Romney describe her as she came to sit to him for her picture. For some time they could hit upon no attitude that pleased them both : whatever the one proposed the other rejected ; at last Mrs. Jordan, pretending to be tired and to be going away, sprang out of her chair, and putting herself into an attitude, and using an expression belonging to her popular part in *The Romp*, said—

"'Well, I'm a-going.'

"Romney instantly exclaimed, 'That will do !' and in that attitude and uttering that expression he painted her."

This portrait was intended to represent Priscilla Tomboy in *The Romp*, but when engraved in 1788, by John Ogborne, it was called Peggy in *The Country Girl*, and has always since retained that name. Though Dorothy spent some time in sitting for the portrait she evidently neither took possession of it nor paid for it, for it was not until November 26, 1791, that it left Romney's studio, having become the property of the Duke of Clarence, who had paid seventy guineas for it to the artist, and who ordered it to be sent to Petersham Lodge.

This picture must have appealed to Romney, for he made three versions of it, one of which was given by the Duke to his daughter Amelia, who married Viscount Falkland, this being now in the Falkland collection ; a second was in the possession of Dorothy's eldest son, the Earl of Munster, and though this is said to have been sold to the late Baron F. de Rothschild, it still hangs in the present Earl of Munster's drawing-room. Another copy was in 1894 in the possession of Sir Charles Tennant. The picture which the Duke of Clarence retained for forty years hung

in his dining-room at Bushey Park, and when Queen Adelaide died in 1849 our national jester and exponent of true sentiment, *Punch*, told its readers the following anecdote: Upon a certain benefit the actor Dowton waited upon the sailor Duke, and was received with the old kindness and simplicity. In the course of the interview, the Duke observed the actor look significantly at a portrait over the chimney—the portrait of Mrs. Jordan. "Yes, Dowton," said the Duke, "she was an excellent woman; and, by the way, I'll tell you a little story about that picture. It always hung there, but some time before I was married to the Duchess I caused it to be removed. Well, shortly after I brought the Duchess home, I found one morning the picture in its old place. 'This,' said the Duchess, 'was done at my desire. I discovered that the picture had long hung there; it was the picture of the mother of your children, and it was not fit that it should be displaced. You must gratify me and let it remain.'"

The Garrick Club possesses a Romney portrait of Dorothy, and there are several others. Romney, like Greuze and Lely, painted a certain expression into the faces of his sitters which, while adding to the regularity of their beauty and the sweetness of their bearing, perhaps helped to lose something of individuality and character. Thus, comparing all the portraits together, that of her in the part of Hypolita gives probably the most characteristic likeness.

Hoppner was the first to produce an elaborate subject picture of Dorothy, one, which as the *Comic Muse* was exhibited in 1786 in the Academy, being sternly criticized. This for many years hung at Hampton Court, though now it has a place in Buckingham

Palace. He also painted her as Hypolita before 1791, and as Rosalind and Matilda. The Rosalind was exhibited at the Academy in 1796 and sold in 1894 for 1100 guineas.

One of Gainsborough's last pictures was a *Portrait of Mrs. Jordan*, and George Morland also depicted her in his later days, probably in 1800.

The sketch of her known as "The Comic Muse, by Goles," was made about 1787, and the portrait of her as Sir Henry Wildair, by W. A. Chalmers, must have been painted immediately after the famous benefit night in the spring of 1788, for it was engraved before November of that year.¹ Thus between 1785 and 1791 some of the most noted of Dorothy's portraits were already in existence, although some of these were erroneously said later to have been painted for the Duke of Clarence.

In 1792 another portrait by Chalmers was published as a frontispiece to a farce by George Saville Carey, entitled *Dupes of Fancy, or Every Man his own Hobby*. In this Dorothy wears hat and feathers with ribbons tied under her chin, a distinguishing feature of the picture being a brooch with the Duke's portrait. Saville prefaced his farce with an adulatory dedication to Dorothy, part of which ran: "The tutelary sisters Melpomene and Thalia, who preside over all scenic acts, have taken you by the hand and placed you on a pedestal so high that envy lowers her scowling front whenever she casts her jaundiced eye upon your exalted station, for you justly assimilate the pathetic manners of the one, and fascinate with the bewitching archness of the other."

¹ "Pictures of Mrs. Jordan," by W. J. Lawrence, in *The Connoisseur*.

Dorothy thought it no shame to wear the Duke's picture at her breast at all times, and a story is told that when in September 1792 she went to see a young actress, Mrs. Litchfield, play at Richmond, she clapped so heartily that her hands caught and broke a golden chain that held his miniature, which dropped upon the stage.

Dorothy was, indeed, always ready to stand by her actions. She had consented to throw in her lot with the Duke, and she did it with her face to the world. She made no attempt at self-deception as did Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she seems not to have been troubled by any qualms of conscience. If fate had decreed that she should never be legally wed, she would accept that decree with as gay a heart as possible. She had done little which was outside the code of morality of her fellow-workers at the theatre, many of whom, like the artists in the Quartier Latin of a later date, considered that there was nothing derogatory or blameworthy in a union unsanctioned by the Church. Although *The Secret History of the Green Room* said that morally her conduct was not to be defended, it admitted that, as a partner of a man's life and as a mother, it was "worthy the imitation of many ladies who had actually entered into the state of matrimony," for her loyalty never swerved.

To her credit it must be put that during the twenty years which she passed by the side of the Duke of Clarence, but for one or two passing whispers, scandal was silent as to the doings of that Prince. He settled down as other men who are married settled down to the quiet domestic life; he became keenly interested in the children who were born to them, superintending their lives and giving them a father's affection. He

also held the high hand over Dorothy's work, so that she never accepted an engagement without his permission, and when a new play was offered for her consideration he read it first and would taboo it if he thought it unsuited to her.

Dorothy, having taken this position, was faithful to it all through, so that this union was as clean and commonplace and sane as any ordinary marriage. She turned an erratic and coarse youth into the nearest she could to a reputable family man, and she did more than this, for, as her letters show, she took a keen interest in his parliamentary career and inspired the best of his efforts. England could have done very well without his speeches, but the fact remains that he was a better man for trying to work than he would have been had he remained inert.

In 1792 the Duke began his series of tirades against the abolition of the Slave Trade, and was regarded as voicing the thoughts of the royal family. His speeches were superlative examples of insufficient knowledge, violence and vituperation; but they implied a mental effort and an attempt to express his conclusions concerning things he had seen in America and Jamaica. When some years later, the enlightened Lords brought in a bill to forbid any divorced person marrying again, he added to the discussions some arguments which can only have been the result of a thoughtful woman's influence.

He opposed the bill on the grounds that it would bear most heavily upon women, and would give them no chance either of regaining respectability or even of living at all. At that time if a wife were found guilty she was not only divorced and disgraced, but her husband secured the whole of her dowry or property in

any form. Thus she was turned out into the world homeless and penniless, her only chance being the humanity of her lover. To deprive her of that—the Duke argued—was generally to drive her to prostitution or to suicide.

So far it was a remarkably enlightened speech, but it made no effect upon the Lords, perhaps because this unmarried husband prefaced and punctuated his arguments with such sentences as: “If any such there should ever unfortunately be, who, forgetting what they owed to their God, their country and themselves, should be induced to lead a profligate and immoral life,” etc., etc.

While anchored to Dorothy Clarence was, however, fairly respectable, and being of no great importance, he sank into a comfortable obscurity, the limelight being only very occasionally turned upon him; after the separation between them, however, he again became the butt of the papers and the caricaturists, the weak lover of women, the sordid hunter for money.

Through the spring and summer of 1792 Dorothy acted constantly, mostly in old characters: *The Fugitive*, by Richardson, in April, being the only novelty. Upon her playing Nell in *The Country Girl* for her benefit *The Bon Ton Magazine* sarcastically informed its readers that Mrs. Jordan had so bad an attack of gout in the right hand that the Duke of Clarence was absolutely obliged to take the trouble of helping her with her benefit tickets. The scale of receipts for the various benefits this year was as follows: Bannister £545, Jordan £540, Siddons £490, Kemble £480, and Crouch £470, which gives some indication of relative popularity. That Dorothy's benefits generally put her near the top of the list, did

not make her more loved by the Kembles or her other rivals; and Kemble gave her little scope for new triumphs, a matter which was seething in Dorothy's mind, to bear fruit in the autumn. Most writers on the subject place her absence from the stage immediately after her reconciliation with the public. *The Secret History of the Green Room*, for instance, says that the papers "did all in their power to drive her from the stage, on account of her connection with the Duke of Clarence, and now that she does not perform they accuse her of ingratitude, of refusing to amuse that public which, a little month ago, they pretended would *never suffer* her again to appear before them! Can anything be more insulting to common justice, or to common sense?" The theatre advertisements show, however, that Dorothy was constantly on the stage until she became ill at the end of July, and before this happened her name was dragged prominently before Society over a small affair of royal want of tact.

Mrs. Hobart, who lived at Richmond, was devoted to amateur theatricals and cards, her husband sharing the acting mania, so much so that though the heir to his brother, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, he was for a time manager of the Opera House. This Mrs. Hobart, who was then over fifty and so fat as to be dubbed by the gossips Mrs. Circumference, was noted for her garden parties in the country, her faro parties in town, and her theatricals in both places.

At all of these the Princes were her constant guests, and she also knew Dorothy. "The Hon. Mrs. Hobart and Little Pickle are to visit, already they have one box in common at the Haymarket. The Romp's salary, indeed, is an object to any of the Pharo tables," commented the malicious *Bon Ton Magazine*.

To a "rural breakfast" at the end of May 1792 Mrs. Hobart had invited the usual crowd, but the morning brought a deluge of rain, and the lady was in an irritable frame of mind, when a note from Petersham Lodge was delivered. It ran—

"Mrs. Jordan presents her compliments to Mrs. Hobart, and at the request of his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, begs leave to offer his excuses for not being able to wait on her to-day, having a previous engagement, which he forgot till this morning. Should Mrs. Hobart's *fête* be put off on account of the badness of the weather till Monday or any other day, his Royal Highness will be extremely happy to wait on her."

Mrs. Hobart must have been inwardly delighted with this delicious letter, though she would not own to it. The day was bad and her party spoiled, but heaven had sent her the wherewithal to amuse her guests, and she made the very most of it, for, with vivid expressions of scorn and anger, she passed the letter about. The ripples caused by the incident quickly spread through society to the papers; "By the rights of man all women are on an equality, and *vice mutato nomine* is virtue" one commented. The most piquant note was given by the acid pen of Walpole. "Mrs. Hobart, poor lady, she has already miscarried of two *fêtes* of which she was big, and yet next minute she was pregnant of another. Those *fausses couches* and Mrs. Jordan's epistle to her, and daily as well as nightly robberies, have occasioned as much cackling in this district as if a thousand hen roosts had been disturbed together."

At Mrs. Hobart's second party in July there was no

need for Little Pickle to write another letter of excuse, for "her Billy was not invited."

At the end of that month Dorothy fell ill, and on August 6 she had a serious miscarriage of a five months' child. "It died immediately," said *The Gentleman's Magazine*. There is some reason to suspect that this was really the birth of the first child Sophia, hidden for fear of again raising a storm of public opinion, as she is supposed to be the eldest Fitzclarence, and George was born in January 1794. If so, Dorothy's subsequent absence from the stage would be accounted for. During this illness the Duke was the most devoted of men if we may judge by his letters. One, written to Admiral Sir Charles Christian on August 10, will sufficiently show this—

"This morning I received yours, and in return am to acknowledge your kind inquiries after Mrs. Jordan. The papers have on this occasion told truth, for she was last week for some hours in danger, but now, thank God, she is much better and I hope in a fair way of perfect recovery. It is my present intention to set out on the 23rd inst. for the seaside, in order that Mrs. Jordan may bathe for six weeks. As the place we mean to go to is no great distance from the Isle of Wight, and if you have nothing better to do, I should be very happy to see you there, and Mrs. Jordan has likewise desired me to say as much."

However, on September 26 he wrote again from Petersham: "I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your friendly letter of the 21st inst., and to request you will accept Mrs. Jordan's thanks as well as my own for your very handsome offer of your house in the Isle of Wight; it is still a matter of doubt whether we

shall go at all to the seaside, the weather being so far advanced; but the Duchess of Cleveland has promised me a house at Margate, which if I go I mean to use.”¹

All through that autumn many tales were told to account for Dorothy’s absence from the theatre. It was said that she demanded the Siddons’s system, of a large payment for one night’s acting instead of a weekly salary, that “the town was not full enough for her ladyship to appear,” that she had deliberately put herself on the shelf. But it may be that she found it impossible to act in the inimical atmosphere of the theatre, for in addition to the jealousy of her rivals, the quarrel with Kemble had again come to a climax. He steadily refused to put on these new plays, in which both dramatists and performers delight. As Boaden admiringly remarked: “Mr. Kemble always did his utmost to keep down this rage for novelty.” Yet history shows that the theatre’s worst times were when the manager was afflicted by that particular form of economy. Kemble himself was something of a victim, for he had got to that point when he could secure nothing from Sheridan and felt cramped all ways. At last he determined to have it out with his chief, taking the opportunity when both were supping with Mrs. Crouch. He began operations by refusing, on entering, to speak to R. B. S., then, after seating himself at table, he rose and fixing his eyes upon Sheridan, cried—

“I am an *eagle* whose wings have been bound down by frosts and snows; but now I shake my pinions, and cleave into the general air, unto which I was born.”

¹ *Romantic Annals of a Naval Family*, by H. M. A. Traherne.

Then he sat down, "looking as if he had relieved himself of an intolerable thralldom." Sheridan, knowing his man, moved his chair to Kemble's side, and by two minutes' smoothing had brought him back into subjection.

Mrs. Jordan, however, could not so win Kemble, and it was not until she had once more appealed to Sheridan that her wishes received attention. Her letter to him was as follows—

"SIR,

"From the very handsome manner in which you acceded to my proposals, and, as I conceived, concluded my engagement, I flattered myself that I should have no difficulty to encounter in immediately entering into my agreement with you—an event I have waited for with increased anxiety, from the circumstance of having, through your liberality, been for some time in the receipt of a very large salary, without being permitted to perform.

"I am totally at a loss to account for the conduct of the manager, in any other way than his *continued disinclination* to let me appear in any new character whatever, a complaint I have often been constrained to make to you, and you have as often acknowledged the justice of it; and in our last negotiation endeavoured effectually to remove, but without success.

"As a duty I owe myself and the public I mean to publish a copy of this letter, to serve as a simple but fair contradiction to some malicious reports that are circulated, insinuating that *I* have withdrawn myself from their protection, a circumstance I have every reason to be proud of, of which I shall ever retain the

most grateful remembrance, accompanied by the sincerest regret at being deprived of the happiness of manifesting, in the duties of my profession, the truth of this assertion. You, sir, I make no doubt, will candidly confess that I have already been too much tormented with regard to this engagement, and also, from this unnecessary delay in bringing forward the comedy, that it is now void; and when I assure you that my situation at the theatre has for a considerable time been made very irksome to me, and that, should I attempt to continue in it *out of respect to you*, I should subject myself to still greater perplexities, which it is not in your power to prevent; I am therefore confident that you will release me from that kind of embarrassment, which the liberality of your conduct towards me, makes me suffer, in the justice of my wish to quit the Haymarket Theatre.

“In complying with the above request you will greatly add to the favours already conferred on,

“Sir,

“Yours, etc.,

“DORA JORDAN.

“Somerset Street,

“Jan. 29, 1793.”

From this letter it may be inferred that Dorothy had entered into a new and advantageous engagement, in which she had made it a condition that she should be allowed fresh characters to act. This condition had become centred round a play called *Anna*, which a Miss Cuthbertson had written especially for Dorothy, and which Dorothy had in her turn altered to suit herself. Thus it is probably true that she staked her reappearance on the Drury Lane stage upon the production of this play, and that Kemble held out against it. However,

this letter to Sheridan settled the matter, for on February 22 Dorothy was back on the boards as Lætitia Hardy, and on the 25th the new play was put on. It probably was not a good play, for it most certainly was not a success. And to help its fall Kemble's attitude was too strongly apparent for the actors to do their best in it, or for the critics to praise. It was acted only once, and, as the pliant Boaden says, "both triumphed." "Alas! poor *Anna*," mourned the more humorous Wilkinson, "she dropped like an unfortunate young lady's pad."

From that date Dorothy continued playing in many of her old parts, while two new ones were added to her list: Lady Restless in *All in the Wrong*, and Clara in *The Female Duellist*. She was not great in Lady Restless, for she was not really meant for the fine lady, and was more apt to kick her train out of her way than to move with languid grace. But in all that she played the town was delighted to see her again, and little as Kemble would have allowed it, prosperity shone more certainly over the theatre when she was actively in the company.

However, the trouble between the two great actors, though scotched was not killed, and through the spring it resolved itself into another, somewhat to the amusement of the other actors and the public, for now it took the form of a dispute over the wording of the play bills. It had for long been the custom to advertise, first the men's parts, putting the most important characters last in such words as "And Macbeth, Mr. Kemble." This was followed by the women's parts ending, for example, with "And Nell, Mrs. Jordan."

Kemble, who was something of a solemn arbiter

upon trifles, invented a new bill which gave precedence to conventional social status without regard to the importance of the characters in the play. So Dorothy, who, since the first month of her London career, had held the post of honour in print, now saw her name placed on a level with the rank and file, and she rebelled. Other actors did the same thing—Lee Lewis threw up his engagement with Stephen Kemble rather than submit to it; but Dorothy, being the most renowned dissenter from the new custom, was made the most of as a rebel, and her name was bandied about in jokes, questioning her real importance. Who was she? And who was her husband? Why, her husband had been killed in the battle of Nubibus, etc.

In the autumn of 1793 the Drury Lane company was without a home, for the Haymarket Theatre was needed for opera. Colman the younger made an arrangement with Sheridan to engage some of his actors for what was then known as the Little Theatre, but Mrs. Siddons, Dorothy, Miss Farren and the Popes were not of that number, they being probably beyond Colman's means. This did not trouble Dorothy, for on January 23, 1794, her first Clarence son was born, receiving the name of George Augustus Frederick. Up to this date her family consisted of four girls; Frances Daly, Hester, Dorothea Maria, and Lucy Ford. Two premature births had also been announced, a boy in 1791 and a girl in 1792. That Mrs. Jordan was happy in her enforced idleness can scarcely be doubted, but when the new Drury Lane opened and its programme excluded her name conjecture at once arose.

The theatre opened in April 1794, with an oratorio as a benison on the new building, and then started to

elevate the public mind by producing tragedy after tragedy. The degraded people, however, would have preferred to laugh, and came in no great numbers to weep, yet Kemble held on his course, and when Mrs. Siddons withdrew in the middle of June, Drury Lane became moribund. Kemble tried to temporize, putting on farces which pleased no one, says Boaden, though if Dorothy had only played in them they would have brought money to the theatre. Once only did she act, and that was on July 2, when she gave her performance in *The Country Girl* for the benefit of the widows and children of those who perished in Lord Howe's victory on "the glorious first of June."

It was not until November 4, 1794, that Dorothy again took a part on the Drury Lane boards, and then as Lady Content in *The Wedding Day*, written by Mrs. Inchbald especially for her, and of which performance Genest said she "was the great support of it all." This play gave her one of the songs that became associated with her name, and which she may have written, "In the Dead of Night," a line of which ran, "Cupid knocked at my window disturbing my rest." This caught on with the public, and so, says an anonymous writer, in every mouth was heard "like the natural notes of some sweet melody which drops from it whether it will or no, nothing but Cupid! Cupid! The whole city, like the heart of one man, opened itself to love."

The great theatrical event of the autumn was the presentation of *Nobody*, a two act comedy by Mrs. Robinson, whom we know as "Perdita," who had for years devoted herself to literature. She had had the temerity to ridicule in this play the outstanding vice of the day among women, that of gambling, and under

the title of the *Lady Greeks* she scattered satire upon those who allowed "speculators in ruin" to open a bank at their evening parties and share the profits. The cast included Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Goodall, Mrs. Pope and Bannister; Miss Farren should have been in it, but gave up her part because she said one of her most intimate friends was attacked in the play. Another actress of outstanding fame — probably Dorothy — was said by Mrs. Robinson to have received a letter announcing that —

"*Nobody* should be damned."

Mrs. Robinson herself received threats, nevertheless the rehearsals continued, and the night of the performance found the players in a more than usually nervous state. As soon as the curtain drew up some men in the gallery, whose liveries betrayed their employers, declared they were sent there to "do up" *Nobody*, and a scene of confusion ensued, even women of distinguished rank hissing through their fans. Bannister and Mrs. Jordan did their utmost to procure a fair hearing, and the more rational part of the audience were inclined to see it through; but effort was useless, and after the third stormy night the play was withdrawn.

Boaden, who displays no knowledge of the hidden machinery of this disturbance, says that Dorothy was very nervous, and hints that it was caused by the fact that Mrs. Robinson was a writer as well as an actress and would visit the failure upon anything rather than the piece. Knowing to what a brutal length theatre brawls could go, Dorothy might well have expected dreadful things to happen when the curtain drew up that night.

From then until February, when *Alexander the*

Great, a pantomime ballet, was put on, Mrs. Jordan acted constantly. After that her next appearance was in April, when, "with characteristic kindness," she played for Bannister's benefit, he, like a good comrade, performing for her in May. During the latter month a play by Cumberland named *First Love*, with "neither plot nor incident nor wit to recommend it," said Bannister, enjoyed a short run because of the acting of Dorothy and Miss Farren. One scene between these two was so affecting that the author remarked: "When two such exquisite actresses conspired to support me, I will not be so vain as to presume I could have stood without their help." On May 4 Dorothy took the part for the only time in her life of the Old Maid in a play of that name, and thenceforward continued her exertions until the end of the season. On August 19 "Nell of Clarence plays Ophelia at Richmond," said Walpole, writing to Miss Berry, and a week later in the same correspondence occurs: "It was printed at the bottom of the play-bills at Richmond last week that Mrs. Jordan would not perform, as it was the birthday of his R.H. the Duke of Clarence—no, to be sure she could not, for the Prince of Orange¹ was to dine with him, and she did the honours at the head of the table; no, the Princesses were not there."

Dorothy had for July an offer so splendid that she might well have been forgiven had she accepted it, but it was from Daly, and her hatred of him was too extreme for her to be beguiled, even though he was ready to give her a hundred guineas a night, and to

¹ The Prince and Princess of Orange were living at Hampton Court Palace at the time.

deposit the total sum in the bank for her before she left England. Hints as to this crept into the papers to be asserted, commented upon, and contradicted. "Surely there can be no ground for the general complaint of scarcity both of money and all other necessities when the public on one hand can afford to pay, and an actress on the other afford to decline a hundred guineas per night for a few hours' exertion."

It would have been worth as much as Daly offered if Dorothy would have acted for him again, for his fortunes were on the wane. He had suffered much from the competition of Astley at the Amphitheatre, who encroached largely in his shows upon what were regarded as the sole rights of the patent houses, and who, having secured a patent in Dublin for a circus, went on to present musical farce. Daly commenced action after action against him, and was eventually ruined, partly because personal character entered largely into the affair. He had won a reputation so atrocious in many ways that he was generally execrated, while Astley was generous, respected and known to most people of influence as a teacher of riding and driving. Now that Mrs. Jordan was famous Daly's vile behaviour to her was public property, and rose ever in his path; so that he felt that the one thing to do was to get her to play for him at any cost. But no lure was strong enough to draw her there while he was in power, and he had to continue on his downward road, being swept away at last by a society of gentlemen players, who, headed by Lord Henry Fitzgerald, built a small theatre in Shaw's Court in opposition to him.

It is said that Dorothy refused even to see him or

to allow him to see his daughter when, in his visits to London, he approached her. Nothing could ever make her forget the injury he had done her.

That autumn Dorothy acted with Kemble in *The Plain Dealer*, one of Wycherley's plays. It was a very rare thing indeed for these two to act together, and perhaps had Kemble tried the experiment oftener, there would have been less friction between them, for Boaden, who was very friendly with Kemble, tells how irresistible the latter found Dorothy and the melody of her voice, adding, "He used the language of Yorick when he was no jester: 'It may seem ridiculous enough to a torpid heart—I could have taken her in my arms and cherished her, though it was in the open street, without blushing.'"

There was a family reason for the rest Dorothy took in the spring of this year, a reason which *The Bon Ton Magazine* foretold some months before, announcing: "Mrs. Jordan is shortly expecting to produce *something*, whether a young Admiral or a Pickle Duchess it is impossible yet to tell." This prophecy was fulfilled when, on March 27, 1795, a boy appeared, "to the great satisfaction of his royal highness."

The author of *The Great Illegitimates* gives a story of Dorothy as a truly domestic and unostentatious mother, which is somewhat amusing and which removes her far from the "fine" lady. He says that "we" have often seen her arrival "in a plain yellow chariot at Miss Tuting's, a milliner in St. James's Street, where she would alight with an infant in her arms, and during her stay frequently change the linen of the little one in the shop, while freely conversing with the person in attendance."

There seems reason to believe that matters were somewhat strained between the Duke and Dorothy at the end of 1795, as hints were given in the papers concerning his flirtations; Mrs. J——ll being one lady who had completely "brought to" a celebrated naval commander. *The Bon Ton* declared in February 1796 that a separation was immediately expected to take place, adding, that the benevolence of the lady's heart and the generosity of her disposition had left her scarcely any property "but what she derived from the exercise of her exquisite talent." And the notice ended with the suggestion that a Mrs. J—— C—— was her successful rival. However, this little flame seems to have puffed out before it was well alight, for there is no further evidence of its existence.

On December 10, when Dorothy should have been acting the part of Julia in *The Surrender of Calais*, she was suddenly taken ill; but she was at work again before the month was finished. Nature was making too great a demand upon her; had she been able to take life easily and to do no fatiguing work things might have gone well; as it was, she had further attacks of illness, and in February 1796 suffered from another miscarriage. A third letter from the Duke to Admiral Christian, written from Clarence Lodge, which he still kept up, refers to this illness: "Dear Christian, I have hitherto been prevented answering you by attending Mrs. Jordan, who has been very ill indeed." What a picture of domesticity these two lines raise!

CHAPTER XII

FROM PETERSHAM TO BUSHY PARK

“And she is Nature’s own. I found her such,
Nor marred the copy by a single touch;
The finished work such high perfection bore,
Art could add nothing; Nature give no more.”

The Comic Muse, on Mrs. Jordan.

IF the thoughts of the Duke were wandering to other fair ladies at the end of 1795, usage had made certain habits so strong that they could not be broken through. Dorothy would drive down to St. James’s to breakfast with Clarence (she generally did so, says *The Fashionable Cypriad*), perhaps entering through that side door which he had been so thoughtful as to have made as soon as the rooms were allotted to him, though there could be nothing surreptitious in her visits, as her carriage would be there for all to see.

It was in this dining-room that, on November 17, 1795, he and she awaited the appearance of Samuel Ireland, who himself believed, and for a time made half the London world believe, that his son, William Henry, then a lad of eighteen, had discovered a number of Shakespeare documents in an old trunk. Through that year all the learned men were engaged in a dispute over these plays and deeds, but so strong and influential was the party which looked upon the parchments as genuine that Sheridan accepted the tragedy of *Vortigern and Rowena* by William Shakespeare—but in reality by William Henry Ireland—for production at Drury Lane.

The play being accepted, there arose the question of actors, and it was probably this which roused Dorothy and the Duke to keen interest. Neither could be regarded as a judge of ancient literature, but the fact that many literary people—Boswell, uttering a *Nunc Dimittis*, had gone on his knees to kiss the manuscript—had signed a paper testifying to their belief in its authenticity was enough, naturally, to give them a bias. So they determined to see the play for themselves, and appointed a time for the Irelands to bring it to the palace. In his *Confessions* published in 1805 young Ireland declared that the Prince and Mrs. Jordan most carefully examined all the documents shown them, and asked many questions, which seem to have been asked by most people, for he goes on to say that he gave the usual answers. The Prince, he adds, made numerous objections, particularly to the redundancy of letters in the spelling apparent throughout the papers; but whatever doubts Clarence had were set at rest, for Dorothy was duly cast for a part in *Vortigern*.

Kemble at first believed in the play, then doubted, and delayed its appearance until he was by pressure obliged to produce it, and, being obliged, he calmly set apart April 1, 1796, for its production. To this Ireland naturally objected, whereupon the 2nd of the month was appointed, Kemble securing his gibe by following it with a farce entitled *My Grandmother*.

Dorothy acted her part of Flavia with "exquisite simplicity," says Boaden. She had accepted the character, and therefore felt it incumbent upon her to make the most of it. Not so other actors; Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Palmer resigned their parts on the plea of ill-

health, and some of the men, knowing that Kemble was performing against his will, acted up to the manager's opinion rather than to the possibilities of the play.

The audience had heard all sides, and knew Kemble's standpoint; it was, therefore, frankly and good-humouredly critical, and roared with laughter when the actor announced—

“And when thy solemn mockery is o'er,
With icy hand thou takst him by the feet
And upwards so, till thou dost reach the heart,
And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night.”

The play being announced for reappearance, an outburst of howls condemned the proposal.

Ireland declared later that he had written every part in the play for a particular actor, and that he had purposely assigned to Mrs. Jordan a character which needed small-clothes, and had introduced a song in which she might touch the audience with her pathetic rendering. He and his father were ruined, £102 13s. 3d. being their share of the night's receipts; and that was all they got according to the writer in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, though Boaden affirms that £300 had previously been paid them. Samuel Ireland had believed implicitly in all that his son had told him, but every one treated him as guilty, and he died four years later, asserting that “he was totally ignorant of the deceit.” Young Ireland fled from his father's house, and for years became more or less of an outcast. In the book he published later he paid strong tribute to Dorothy's particular kindness and affability when he went to see her and in the Green Room where he remained through the night of the representation, “when not only her transcendent abilities as an actress

were exerted in my behalf before the curtain, but reanimating expressions while in the Green Room continually flowed from her lips, in order to rouse me from the mental depression under which I so obviously laboured."

Kemble did not grieve over the failure of this play, and his attitude proved him a man before he was an actor, being better pleased to say "I told you so" than to try for success. The management were inclined to blame his acting for the extent of the fiasco, and there was a general sense of friction, ready to blaze forth on the least occasion. The occasion was not long in coming, for Dorothy chose *Hamlet* for her benefit night. *Why* she did this it is impossible to say, as Kemble had already advertised it for his own benefit. It may have been pure cussedness in retaliation for his acting in *Vortigern*, or she may have wished to try conclusions with him; in any case her choice led to high and violent disputes, and the matter was at last offered to the arbitration of Sheridan, who gave the wise judgment that neither should take *Hamlet* as a benefit play, which so annoyed Kemble that he threatened to resign. Boaden carefully gives no hint of this affair either in his *Life* of Kemble or that of Mrs. Jordan. Kemble's annoyance was loudly uttered and widely criticized, one letter among the many which appeared in the press containing the following paragraphs—

"Kemble can never stand in the first rank of favourites till he evinces greater abilities and less self-conceit. Before that period arrives he will constantly meet with mortifications whenever he contends with a performer of Mrs. Jordan's merits, who is singularly

capable of supporting the interests of the theatre, as he has himself most injudiciously proved by placing her perpetually in situations where all around her were drawbacks instead of assistants. If any dispute between actors be brought before the public, their motto must, of course, be *Spectemur agendo*—Let our performances be the test—and upon this ground the question has long been completely divided between the contending parties. . . . I cannot quit this subject without remarking that I have scarcely ever observed a more glaring instance of clumsy misrepresentation than in the statement made of the loss likely to be sustained by the lovers of the drama *in consequence*, forsooth, *of this fracas*. A long list of performers is pompously held forth as following Mr. Kemble upon this his threatened secession; whereas, most unfortunately, not only all those who frequent the theatre, but all who cast their eye upon a newspaper, have repeatedly been informed that every individual of that list has, for some time past, resolved upon quitting the stage at the conclusion of the present season, and that, too, before *Hamlet* (which, it seems, was the bone of contention) was even put into rehearsal.

“MISO PUFF.”

Dorothy chose the part of Juliet for her benefit on April 25, to which character she scarcely did justice; for, as with Imogen, she did not possess the right qualities to interpret it well. The benefit system must have been somewhat of a charge upon a noted and good-humoured performer, who was far more likely to be solicited to play than one of more austere mood, such as Mrs. Siddons. There was ever some reason

for Dorothy to give her work with only sweet words for payment, and if she now and then repented and let another slip into her place, her taskmaster, the public, was always ready with flagellation.

Thus, in this year of 1796, after her own benefit, she had to repay the favours received in a way that no less popular person would have been required to do. At Mrs. Pope's benefit, May 5, she played Lucy in *The Virgin Unmasked*; for Barrymore, on the 20th, she took Juliet for the third time; for Bannister the next night she was Nell in *The Devil to Pay*; then came a charity performance at Covent Garden, and another at Drury Lane, on June 9, for the widows and orphans of Benson, who had acted with her in *Vortigern*. Benson had thrown himself down from the top of his house in a delirium, which was caused, it was reported, by the fact that the scornful shouts of the audience over that play rang constantly in his ears.

For some reason Dorothy resigned her part at the Covent Garden benefit and drew the usual public rebukes. "How is it that Mrs. Jordan was absent on an occasion of charity?" "If Mrs. Jordan refused to play she was wrong!" "There is too much fuss over the little Sultana," etc. Truly the public was a hard taskmaster.

For the last time she took the part of Priscilla Tomboy in *The Romp* on May 6 of this year, for she was now nearly thirty-five, and began to feel disinclined for the breeches parts in which she was so popular.

Kemble's position had not improved as a manager. Not only the performers but the weekly workmen were often unpaid; duns were always about the doors, and almost nightly he received notes, such as "Mrs.

So-and-So will not go on the stage to-night unless all arrears are remitted"; or "Messrs. This-and-That will not supply the stage furniture unless the previous bill is paid." To one who was straightforward and scrupulous in his dealings this was a refinement of torture, which culminated when he was actually arrested for some theatrical debt. He paid the money and resigned his post. This resignation has been attributed by some biographers to the quarrel over *Hamlet* with Dorothy, but his relation with her formed but one of a long list of grievances which made things unendurable.

Dorothy, it is said, nearly always got her money, for she had "a very powerful friend who would not allow her to be trifled with," especially on such an important matter as money, might have been added. Boaden said that this "friend" had secured a "steady aversion which, in a certain quarter [Kemble], was always manifested at the very sound of his name." However, if in London she had to be always on the defensive, in little Richmond she queened it over every one. She played what she liked, and occasionally indulged herself in those sentimental parts which were not so popular in town, drawing from one critic the remark that he would hint to her that she could not be Mrs. Siddons, Miss Farren and Mrs. Jordan at one and the same time. When she played there in September the ever-ready reformer rebuked her in *The Monthly Mirror*—

"There is a custom at this theatre which cannot be too much reprobated, and which is that of assigning the whole of the Green Room to Mrs. Jordan during her engagement, for the purpose of dressing; so that while one actress is occupying a large apartment, which

ought to be devoted to general use, twenty or thirty performers are under the necessity of standing by the sides and back scenes for several hours together among lamp-lighters and scene-shifters, because Mrs. Jordan is too *great* to intermingle with the rest of the company." In this case sympathy must be with the other performers, though they had, as alternative to the sides, various dressing-rooms in which to wait.

Dorothy's desire to play sentimental parts was further gratified when Miss Farren left the stage, which she did in the midst of an uproar in 1797. One night the audience was kept waiting three hours for her to appear, and were then told that she was too ill—the management having spent its time in futile persuasions. It owed her a tremendous sum, and nothing but an unattainable golden salve would have cured her illness. Having presumably made her terms, she appeared again four nights later, to meet a house which was gathered for the sole purpose of hissing and raging at her, and she left the theatre rather than apologize for a fault which she considered not to be hers. This was the easier in that she no longer needed the favour of the public, for the Countess of Derby died on March 14, and on May 1 Miss Farren married the delighted Earl, who had long paid his suit to her. With the loss of Miss Farren and the Kembles, and with Wroughton as manager, Dorothy was practically supreme at Drury Lane.

In 1797 the Duke of Clarence made a change of residence, and one which was decidedly for the better. Petersham Lodge was not a large house, though it was built on a stately plan round three sides of a grassy court on the edge of Richmond Park. This, probably wanting money, he had sold in 1794, though he still

continued to live there.¹ But when old Lady North died in the early part of 1797, Clarence was made Ranger of Bushy Park in her stead, and in consequence of his position as Chief Steward of the Honour of Hampton. Thus Bushy House became his residence.

Bushy House, surrounded by lovely gardens and inset in the park of that name, was built in the reign of William III, of red brick and was somewhat curious in form; for on either side of the great square of the main building are lower wings, possessing rounded ends and extending both ways, forming the whole as the letter H. In the end of one wing looking west was the ballroom, its companion wing on the same side holding the chapel, for William of Clarence was devout in the blind fashion which considered that religion had little to do with ethics, and he appointed several chaplains for his service. The drawing-room—its moulded ceiling upheld by pillars—and the other sitting-rooms in which Dorothy lived for fourteen years, are now filled with the delicate machinery of the National Physical Laboratory, in connection with which many buildings have risen in one corner of the garden; yet the house itself has suffered little change, and much of the garden remains as it was a hundred years ago, still containing the temple, or pillared summer-house which was erected in honour of Lord Nelson.

For Dorothy this sylvan spot must have been a great contrast to her Drury Lane existence, and she soon grew to love it. Here most of her children were born, and here they grew up and dwelt long after she had gone out of their lives. In 1798 the number of her

¹ Petersham Lodge was pulled down in 1834 and the grounds included in the park. The present Petersham Lodge is the third of that name.

children were seven, three of them Fitzclarences. About the date of the birth of the first Fitzclarence girl, Sophia, there is, as has already been said, some doubt; it may have been in 1797, but if so, she "came out" at the early age of fourteen. On the other hand, a member of the family asserts that Sophia was the eldest Fitzclarence child, in which case she must have been born in 1792, when Dorothy was said to have suffered such a serious miscarriage, and the birth must have been concealed from the public because of the recent sensation concerning the Clarence-Jordan alliance. The way in which this event was announced in *The Gentleman's Magazine*—"a five months' child, which died immediately"—almost raises suspicion that this was so. But nineteen was considered at that date as very late for presentation in Society. However, succeeding years were apportioned to births or miscarriages, January 1794 and March 1795 to the former, and March 1793 to the latter.

With her generous nature, Dorothy made warm friends both among her dependents and outside her home; nothing testifies so much to this as the letters which she wrote at this time, many of which are still in existence. They were often undated, but from internal evidence and the watermarks it has, however, been easy to assign them to their right period. The following, perhaps to Miss Turner, was written soon after the settling in Bushy House in 1797, and betrays interesting facts about the family.

"July 9th, Bushy House.

"I will not, my dear friend, set about accounting for my apparent neglect of you—your own kind heart will find excuse for me, and will, I am sure, do me the

justice to feel it did not arise from any want of affection—ungrateful indeed must I be to forget all your kind affections—believe me, I miss them on all occasions. I am now settled here for some time—but not paid. Fanny [Frances Daly, then fifteen years of age] has taken up her residence at Elliott's, Dora and Lucy I have got comfortably lodged and boarded within a quarter of a mile of me—my sister is with me. I had come to the resolution of parting with her, but she shew'd so much contrition and sorrow at the idea that I shall try her once again; the dear little ones are all quite well, but, unfortunately, the smallpox surrounds us. God preserve them. I am sure that you will be glad to hear that the Duke gain'd a great triumph in the House of Lords. Mrs. Lloyd was very anxious to have the use of my house again [probably in Somerset Street], but I positively refus'd her. I expect Mrs. Sinclair, however, in a day or two. I saw her last Friday, when she requested me to remember her affectionately to you; so write, and do not treat me as I deserve. God bless you, my dear girl, and tell me when it is likely that I shall see you; you will not surely return without letting me hear from you. I am in your debt, but that I can pay; but how shall I make a return for all your goodness and the many happy moments you have afforded me—let me see you again, and I think I shall prove better how to value you. Once More God Bless You.

“Yours ever affectionately and sincerely,
“DORA JORDAN.”

The name of the unsatisfactory sister not being given, it is not possible to say whether this was Hester or the younger one; the Mrs. Lloyd mentioned was the

wife of the Rev. Mr. Lloyd of Ewell, chaplain to the Duke, who would come over, bringing his surplice with him, when he thought it right to conduct a service in the ducal establishment. A little later, for a consideration of £400 a year, paid by Dorothy, he undertook to board, lodge and teach Dorothy's eldest children, as well as the young sister. As Hester was thirty-nine at the time, no stretch of imagination could turn her into a young thing needing education, and it may even be doubted whether this girl was a sister at all, for the youngest sister Dorothy could have had would have been twenty-five. May she not have been the elusive Hester, who exists rather by hints than facts—Dorothy's own child by an untraced man named Bettesworth, born before the Ford connection?

It is noteworthy that at this time Dorothy was short of money and "had not been paid"—by whom? the theatrical people or the Duke? There is also another point in this letter which is quite remarkable. She mentions a Mrs. Sinclair as being expected on a visit to Bushy House. Now this lady, the wife of Robert Sinclair, Laird of Fiswick, was Dorothy's aunt, her father's own sister, and daughter of the stern Judge Bland. Thus it is proved that she was accepted socially by another legitimate member of the Bland family, in addition to John Bland of Edinburgh and Nathaniel Bland, her father's brother in London. Mrs. Sinclair was a lady of social importance, and the Duke of Clarence wrote to her concerning one of her visits to Bushy as follows¹—

¹ To General Thomas Bland Strange, R.A., a descendant of Mrs. Sinclair's sister, Lucy Bland (Mrs. Orpen), I am indebted for kind permission to reproduce this letter.

"Bushy, Monday night.

"DEAR MADAM,

"This evening I received the enclosed letter from Lord Harcourt, by which you will perceive at length it is settled that Strange is to be considered as entitled free of all expense.¹ Keep the letter to prevent future disputes.

"The country is beautiful, and as Mrs. Jordan's carriage returns from London on Thursday, you will perhaps come in it, and enjoy the fresh eggs, butter and cream. Remember we dine at five, and ever believe me,

"Yours sincerely,
"WILLIAM."

Another letter of Dorothy's, written two years later to Miss Turner, who had probably held the position of governess in the family, may be reproduced here, as it deals with domestic events, and again shows the pressing want of money.

"Why will you, my dear girl, make yourself uneasy about me. Believe, I am very well; however, I think a little bark may strengthen me. I am sincerely sorry that you are going to leave us, but won't blame your friends for their anxiety to see you. Let me know when we may expect to see you again. Let me request you will not stay long away; believe me, you have not, among the people who love—and who must love—you, one who more truly values your friendship than I do. My poor little girls will miss your society greatly. You give me great pleasure in saying that

¹ An allusion to the fact that her nephew, Alexander Strange, grandson of Judge Bland, was made a Knight of Windsor for distinguished military services.

you think Mrs. Betty will answer; God grant she may. And now, my dear girl, the money I owe you is among the least of the kindnesses I have received from you, and it is the only one of the many I can make a return for. Let me know how much it is, and I will so far gratify your good heart as to let you have it as I can spare it. The dear little ones are all well. God bless you, and may you be as happy as you deserve and as I shall now wish you.

“Your affectionate friend,

“DORA JORDAN.

“The Duke desires to be remembered affectionately to you.”

To this may be added a third letter, written in 1800, and probably also to Miss Turner. In this Dorothy mentions buying a house, but which house this was it has not been possible to trace.

“. . . Your kind remembrances, my dear friend, and gentle rebukes sensibly affect me; believe me, no length of time or space can ever lessen the love I have for you. You know my dislike to writing, which has been greatly strengthened by seldom having anything pleasant to communicate. I hate talking of myself. I hear of you, tho’ not from *you*, which I own I have no right to complain of; do not, I entreat you, punish me too severely by not keeping *your* promise of coming to us. The house will be ready to receive you the end of September; I should be afraid of your going into [it] before. Can your dear and good friends part with you? I admit their superior claims to your company. . . . I trust the girls will be comfortably settled. Mrs. Elliot has got them a very superior governess,

who will, I hope, make the house very agreeable to you all. I shall be with you some part of every day—too vain I am to hold this out to you as an inducement to fulfil your promise. George sends his love to dear Dott; so far from having forgot you, believe me, you are a very constant theme. I am sure you will be glad to hear that dear Mrs. Elliot has got a little girl. The dear children are all in high health, and really I think Frederick the finest and handsomest boy I ever saw, but he has not a tooth yet, which makes me rather uneasy. I have been playing . . . and fagging myself to death, but it has enabled me to pay a good part of the purchase money of my house. The dear good Duke desires me to say that he shall be the first to welcome you. God bless you, dear. I rejoice to hear that your health is so much improved; may you enjoy that and every other blessing is the sincere prayer of your affectionate friend,

“DORA JORDAN.”

It was about the year 1797 that Dorothy exerted herself to gain the friendship of a man who might be useful to her. She was so often vilified by the press that it is not to be wondered at that she looked round for a friend in its ranks who would now and then do her a good turn. She had seen James Boaden in the company of Kemble and Sheridan, and as he was the editor of *The Oracle*, also a playwright and a critic, she secured an introduction to him (or, as he himself says, introduced herself to him), and afterwards occasionally wrote to ask his advice upon some theatrical matter.

Boaden dearly loved high rank, and the favour of a prince was sufficient to give him exquisite happiness,

so thenceforth all things that Dorothy asked of him were granted, in so far as was possible. He may have known more of the joint life at Bushy Park than he revealed; indeed he must have known more, for things which were not included in his book were often public property at the time of their happening, and when he was in Dorothy's confidence. In writing his *Life* of her, too, he started by making great promises of settling all mysteries, yet he ended—having probably been cajoled by William IV—by telling nothing, his chief new contribution being a number of letters written to him by Mrs. Jordan. As *The Dramatic Magazine* said of his book, “it might with equal propriety have been termed a History of England or a Life of George III,” so diffuse was he.

He does, however, give some interesting pictures of Dorothy, such as the following, which belongs to 1798. She had sent for him to Somerset Street to talk over a new play—*The Secret*—by Morris, which was filled with improper situations, such being, as Dorothy pointed out, “quite usual on the stage, whatever the world might think of it.” His advice was against it, and she told him that the Duke, who had read it, had uttered the same verdict. Boaden adds—

“She was in charming spirits, and occasionally ran over the strings of her guitar. Her young family were playing about us, and the present Colonel George Fitzclarence, then a child between four and five years old, amused me much with his spirit and strength; he attacked me as, his mother told me, his fine-tempered father was accustomed to permit him to do. He certainly was an infant Hercules.” From this it may be gathered that Dorothy sometimes took her children to town with her when making a stay there.

There was one event which happened just now which caused Dorothy much pain; a small thing, but remembered to the end of her life. Charles Macklin, "the father of the Stage," died in 1797 at the age of ninety-seven, and two years later his *Life* was published. In this was detailed a promise made and broken by Mrs. Jordan. The old man's last years had been rendered comfortable by the sale of a subscribed edition of his works in 1791, at which time Dorothy had written him as follows—

"I have done myself the pleasure of subscribing to your works ten pounds, and request you will accept the same from me, every year, in remembrance and respect of your superior abilities."

After this, however, she had found a more insistently needy friend in the Duke of Clarence, and was unable to continue the ten pounds a year promised, which made Macklin very angry; he wrote for the money, and she, shrinking from a definite refusal, did not answer. So in his *Life* appeared the following criticism: "She" (Mrs. Jordan) "had received all the merit and praise due to her for her promised liberality, because her letter addressed to Mr. Macklin was enclosed under cover to Mr. John Bell, bookseller, Strand; was handed about in his shop as a testimony of her generosity, and announced publicly in the newspapers; but, lest the world should be misled, we can assure the public that Mr. Macklin never received one single shilling from Mrs. Jordan subsequent to her first subscription. The sum of the transaction is this: Mrs. Jordan had all the merit of the bounty; Mr. Macklin had not the benefit of it."

LIBRARY OF
CLIPPINGS.



*Mrs. Jordan as Hypolita
in *The Would and The Would Not*.
after Hoppner. 1790.*

Would Macklin's vexed spirit have been soothed had it known how deeply Dorothy felt this reproach, and what an impression his hardness made upon her mind? In one of her conversations with Miss Williams at St. Cloud in 1816 she referred to the Macklin episode—

“I must repeat, Miss Williams, that it never came within my knowledge to observe cruelty a predominant passion in a performer; the only instance I remember upon record of malice being carried to a pitch of revenge was exemplified in the conduct of Mr. Macklin, who certainly seemed to possess the germs of vindictiveness in his composition.” She continued, referring to the Kembles, but not by name: “As for jealousy and ill-nature, I had an awful share to encounter in the progress of my public life, and from quarters pursuing a different walk, consequently the last who ought to have manifested their spleen towards me. For a considerable time I met those shafts with good nature, but, finding such conduct increase rather than otherwise, I banished my smiles and had recourse to reserve, until, the attacks becoming too frequent and pointed for further endurance, I was compelled to make my grievances known in another channel” (Sheridan), “where immediate redress was accorded me.”

Dorothy worked very hard this year, and appeared in several new pieces, one being *The Will*, by Frederick Reynolds, another Cumberland’s *The Last of the Family*, in which Dorothy took the part of the heroine. In June she closed the Covent Garden season by acting Peggy and Nell for a benefit, and at Drury Lane she did *The Country Girl* for the widows and orphans made by the battle off Cape St. Vincent. Later, a benefit was given for the sufferers in Lord

Duncan's action off the coast of Holland, when Dorothy Jordan acted in *The Will* and *The Prize*. "In short," says Boaden, "she was a full and perfect contrast to those whose services were always to be paid, though exerted even for a relation." By which last sentence Boaden meant Mrs. Siddons, who, whether she deserved it or not, had gained the reputation of never playing except for money.

That summer Mrs. Jordan acted both at Richmond and Margate. At the latter place she found the bracing air very good after the closeness of London and the relaxing effect of the Thames Valley, and from this time she often not only refreshed her body but replenished her purse in the small but fashionable Thanet resort.

Once while on the Margate stage she had to act with a hitherto unknown Irishman, and at the point where he had to kiss her in the play she turned her head so as to present little more than her ear.

"Och, by Jasus," said he, "I'll be d——d if I kiss you at all, at all; if you won't let me play my part as a man should, you may do it all yourself." And he very deliberately walked off the stage, to the loud and delighted laughter of the audience.

Among her plays that autumn was *The Castle Spectre*, by "Monk" Lewis, which was very short but regarded as astonishingly beautiful, its chief attraction being a glorified ghost scene in which the spirit of Angela's mother comes from an oratory, which is suddenly and miraculously illuminated, to bless her orphan child. This made the little play so popular that it was acted nearly fifty times during the season.

This character of Angela explains an allusion in a hurried letter Dorothy wrote to Lewis, asking that she

might bring a new comedy of his before the public. The letter is undated, but as the comedy was brought out in 1799 it must have been written about this time.

“DEAR SIR,

“Before I had the pleasure of seeing you last I had determined to write to you to request that you would have the goodness to enable me to have the happiness of presenting the public the Comedy of the *East Indian*, as any production of yours would prove of the utmost consequence. I cannot describe to you how disappointed I should be, independent of the great loss of so great an attraction. I will put off my night till after Bannister’s; don’t let poor Angela plead in vain. I will have the copy returned to me after the play; of the success I have not a doubt. Once more let me entreat.

“Yours ever obliged,

“DORA JORDAN.”

From January 16 to March 14, 1798, Dorothy acted every theatrical night, and then, an opera being put on, she had some rest. In May she was in O’Keefe’s *She’s Eloped*, in which she “laboured hard for the author, but the task was hopeless from the first act.” Of this failure O’Keefe wrote—

“For ‘She’s Eloped’ her gentle heart much grieved,
That jilt, called Fortune, ceased to use me well,
My comic efforts were but ill received,
With Dora tho’ she came, frowns greet my Arabel.”

In June, to mention benefit nights only, she gave her services for the General Lying-in Hospital; her Beatrice in *The Panel* drew crowds to Miss De Camp’s evening, and in September she acted in *The Stranger*

for the benefit of John Palmer's children; he, poor man, having fallen dead on the stage in the May of that year, it was said, through grief at the loss of his wife and a favourite child. This summer she acted at Richmond, but nowhere else, for which abstinence there was sufficient family reason, in that on November 18 her daughter Mary was born at Bushy House.

This time she seems to have taken a long rest, for the next public mention of her is in March 1799; for her benefit in April she played in the *East Indian* the part she had been so anxious to secure from "Monk" Lewis. In May Mrs. Siddons, Kemble and Dorothy were rehearsing *Pizarro*, a tragedy by Kotzebue, whose *Stranger* had made him popular in England. Sheridan had spent months in altering the play, and so took a paternal interest in its representation, passing an evening of acute misery in his box on the opening night. He did not believe in Mrs. Jordan for tragedy, but had to give her the second woman's part that he might secure the attraction of her name, but he was certain that she would not come up to his ideal. Boaden says that he was in the utmost ill-humour, shocked, almost stamping with anger at everything Dorothy said, and declaring that she could not speak a line of it properly. But his chief terror was over Mrs. Siddons, who had not fallen in with his notion of the character, and he kept saying, "There, there, I told you, Richardson, that she would never fall into the character." With Kemble, however, he was transported, crying, "Beautiful! sublime! perfection!"

However, the players settled down to their parts, and the piece had a wonderful run; as some one said, "Fortunately the health and strength of the performers lasted through thirty-one repetitions," Sheridan being

the better by £15,000. These Kotzebue dramas were all built upon seduction and villainy, but their intense Teutonic sentimentalism made them very dear to the English heart.

Through all this work Dorothy continued her maternal cares, her children coming quickly one after the other, and on December 9 she gave birth to the boy Frederick mentioned in a foregoing letter. There was, in fact, little truth in the compliment which *The Comic Muse* tried to pay the new Countess of Derby through Dorothy—

“Jordan be sure to do *your* house a grace
Would cease her labours for the Brunswick race ;
Proud for your brow the laurel wreath to twine,
Lop off one hero from the royal line.”

It was just at this time that Kelly and Sheridan laid a bet as to whether the King could be induced to attend the Drury Lane Pantomime of *Blue Beard*, evidence of which is preserved in the British Museum on a scrap of paper bearing the following—

“Dec. 8, 99. Mr. Kelly Bets Mr. Sheridan a Rump and Dozen that the King comes to Drury Lane Theatre this season to the performance of *Blue Beard*.

“M. KELLY.

“R. SHERIDAN.

“At 40 Curzon Street.”

Pressure *was* probably put upon the King to extend his patronage once more to Drury Lane, though whether he saw *Blue Beard* must remain unknown. But if Kelly lost his bet the moral victory lay with him, for George IV commanded several performances in the spring of 1800, and he always had the good taste

to choose plays in which Dorothy took part. On Thursday, March 20, she played before him as Lady Contest in *The Wedding Day*; on Thursday, April 3, she was Miss Prue in *Love for Love*; and on May 15 the commanded play was *She Would and She Would Not*.

This last was an evening long to be remembered. The King, Queen and no less than four princesses arrived in state, the younger people anxious again to see the woman who "appeared to have justified the attachment of one so dear to them, and to retain his respect as well as his affection." Scarcely, however, had they entered their boxes—indeed before all were in, and while the King stood for a moment in the front looking upon the theatre, when a half-crazy man, named Hadfield, shot at him from the pit. The Queen pressed forward to know what was wrong, and was told it was only a squib. But she was too alert to be deceived, and asked her royal spouse if they should remain.

"Certainly! the *whole* of the entertainment," was the kingly response.

So these poor frightened ladies sat out a long performance, three of the princesses appropriately fainting according to the fashion of the times. All honour to the fourth, Elizabeth, who resisted the temptation to add to the confusion!

The audience enjoyed themselves by terrific excitement, demanding that the would-be assassin, who had been dragged neck and crop over the orchestra box into the nether regions, should be produced on the stage that they might be satisfied that he was properly bound. So Dorothy, with her pretty voice, came on to assure them that the miscreant was perfectly well

secured and properly attended. Then, with the introduction of "God save the King," the play commenced. Every one was too agitated to act well, and the evening drew to an early close. It is said that the King recoiled when the pistol-shot sounded; then stepped boldly to the front of the box, put his opera-glass to his eyes and calmly looked round the house. That night the monarch had to spend a considerable time going from room to room to calm the weeping and fainting princesses, Amelia falling into one fit after another, until it was wondered whether she would recover at all. Some people are fearing to-day lest women should lose their womanliness—that is to say, lest they should lose their sentimentality, their dependence, their sweet, clinging ways; but how would those people like it if the dear things went back to the manners of a hundred years ago, fainting and shedding floods of tears whenever any untoward event occurred?

Boaden says that the shooting incident was bitter for the actors, as they could no longer hope for the King's presence in their house.

Dorothy's first appearance this year, March 18, 1800, was an ovation. She had made too long an absence, said *The Monthly Mirror*, and she was welcomed "with a warmth which proved that she had not lost any portion of that popularity which her admirable comic talents had so deservedly gained her."

For the first time she played Lady Teazle on May 27, a part which was a favourite with her to the end of her life. It was this month that she introduced "a simple little ballad" into her part of Beatrice in *The Panel*, called "The Blue Bells of Scotland," and the following year this song was published as being composed and sung by her, which gave rise to a *Notes and*

Querries controversy in 1852, as well as a reputation to Dorothy in her own day of being a composer; a fact which shows how ready the world was to credit their Thalia with powers unusual to an actress.¹ She was known to write some of the songs she sang, and even published them at a profit, as one of her letters shows; she was believed to be the author, or part-author, of at least two plays, *The Spoiled Child* and *Anna*, and now her admirers credited her with being a composer of music.

¹ The words of the song in question were of much earlier date; the composer remains undiscovered.

CHAPTER XIII

FAMILY CARES

“Should British women from the contest swerve?
We'll form a female *army of reserve*—
And class them thus. Old maids are *pioneers*;
Widows, *sharpshooters*; wives are *fusileers*;
Maids are *battalions*—that's all under twenty;
And as for *light troops*, we have them in plenty;
Vixens the *trumpet* blow; scolds beat the drum—
When thus prepared, what enemy will come?”

From *The Soldier's Daughter*, by CHERRY.

“She was a constant wife, an affectionate mother and a sincere friend, ever solicitous and on the watch for their united comfort and happiness.”
—*The Fashionable Cypriad*, on Dorothy Jordan.

FOR some years Dorothy Jordan's life seems outwardly to have run smoothly, and to offer nothing of great moment to the chronicler. She passed most of her time at Bushy, a new baby appearing almost every year.

When the theatre opened in September 1801, Dorothy acted for about two months, then went into the country to prepare for the coming event, which occurred on January 18, on which date her daughter Elizabeth was born—she who, through her marriage with the Earl of Errol, was to become the grandmother of the late Duke of Fife.

Thirteen months later, on February 18, 1802, another child arrived, Adolphus, whether to the delight or distress of his parents is not revealed. By this time the public was beginning to look askance at that establishment at Bushy House, which seemed capable of producing a whole generation of pseudo-princelings, to demand support from John Bull. Thus, the Duke

and Dorothy were made by newspaper comment to feel their children something of a care, and to regard each successive arrival with apprehension. The caricaturist also found this family a fit subject for brush and pencil —though the output of pictorial skits was nothing compared with that which harried the early matrimonial life of Queen Victoria. The pictures were, however, much uglier; all Clarence's personal defects, his short stature, thick lips and goggle eyes being cruelly exaggerated. In one cartoon he is represented like a rough farmer mopping his heated brow, while he drags through the park a perambulator containing three hideous children, the mother walking behind and assiduously studying a theatrical part. But a hint or drawing of Dorothy, describing her as extravagant, or using money wrongly is not to be found among them, the tendency being rather to prove that she had little money to spend. Indeed, these two people seemed always to be hard up; the Duke's income was gone before it came, even though he lived fairly quietly, and Dorothy was too generous ever to be rich. She had many ways of spending an income, quite apart from her own home and personal expenses, and it was not difficult for her income to melt and leave no trace behind. The public seemed always to know when she felt particularly short of money, as the following—very likely false—anecdote shows—

“Mrs. Jordan, being once in great distress, and dunned by an apothecary, besought him to desist, as she was unable to pay him, and begged that he would be satisfied with taking her life. The son of *Æsculapius*, although he had no objection to sending people out of the world, *professionally*, and *secundem artem*, was yet, nevertheless, quite staggered at a proposal

that sounded so terrible, and recoiled from it in evident horror. Mrs. Jordan, however, presented to him—good heavens, a dagger, or some other dreadful weapon? No, reader, the instrument she presented was merely intended to kill—time, viz. two volumes of her own *Memoirs*, which she tendered to the man of medicine, and thus relieved him from his amazement and apprehension."

At this time, there seems to have been little difference in her family dependents. George, gentle, affectionate and inefficient, was, more than likely, still a pensioner, though he was soon to seek his fortunes in America—and to find there a pitiable death. Frank was, undoubtedly, still requiring all the assistance he could get from Dorothy, who could never refuse giving if she had anything to give. He was also the occasional cause of domestic trouble between her and the Duke, who, whatever his promises, protestations and bonds, seemed much more concerned about the disposition of her money than about bestowing upon her the promised £1000 a year.

The following letter must have been written when custom had staled the Duke's love and trust in his partner's carefulness; for it reveals a somewhat painful state of things :

"DEAR FRANK,

"Having written to you immediately on the receipt of your last, saying that as soon as I got the money I would send you what I could spare, I was greatly surprised in not hearing from you in reply. That the person to whom I entrusted the letter actually opened it and kept it till this day, will account for my wishing you to copy the enclosed in a strange hand, and direct

it to Mrs. King, George's Coffee-house, Haymarket. This woman was many years in the family at St. James, and I suppose wanted to catch me sending money to you or any of my family. The sooner you write the better. You must afterwards write such a letter to me that I may be able to show should (it) be necessary, and which I would indite for you. I will send you to-morrow £5.

"Yours,

"D. J."

From this letter it can be seen that the Duke thought himself justified in saying how Dorothy might spend the money she earned, and that if she wished to help a worthless brother, disguised handwriting and round-about methods were requisite. It shows also a worse thing, and that was, that people about the Duke (notably one who had long been a servant in the Royal household), had permission, if not instructions, to spy upon Dorothy, and intercept her letters!

Frank had married, but he led an unsettled life, for he had now no profession. When he went to Trelethyn he was no doubt persuaded by Dorothy, who gave him an allowance of £50 a year; so he took a little house in the Cathedral Close of St. Davids, probably hoping to live the simple life within his income, as he had no children to support. However, this did not last long, and Captain Frank Bland returned once more to the wider world. What he did then is matter for conjecture; begged of Dorothy, certainly, while she tried various means of finding him occupation. A friend of mine recently saw a letter which the Duke of York wrote to her from the Horseguards, in the spring of 1799, promising to accede to her request of appoint-

ing some one to a certain post. Who was this? Perhaps Frank, under his own, or an assumed name; for the Duke of York, who was soon after sent to the Netherlands, was in a position then to make appointments for that expedition. Perhaps Francis went with him, only to return once more to worry his sister. In any case, he entirely disappears from record after this, and it may be that a strange story told by Laurence Oliphant explains what became of him.¹

Oliphant tells that when in Italy, in 1862, he visited Manfredonia, a town on the western coast. Walking through the streets one day, he was accosted by a little girl, who gave him a note which ran—

“Miss Thimbleby requests the pleasure of the English Gentleman’s company to tea to-night, at nine o’clock. Old English Style.”

Possessed by the spirit of adventure, he accepted the invitation, and found his way in the evening to an old tumble-down palazzo. On entering, he mounted a wide and beautiful staircase of carved oak, at the top of which stood a little old woman, like a witch in appearance, bobbing and curtseying all the time he was making the ascent. She shook hands affectionately and warmly, trembling with excitement or age—for she was very, very old, well on in the nineties, she said. She had forgotten much of her English, having been in Italy since 1804, when she had gone there with her brother, who was appointed English Consul at Manfredonia, that year. Her brother and his wife had died long before, but she had a small pension from the English Government, and was taken care of by nieces

¹ *Episode in a Life of Adventure in Albania and Italy.* By Laurence Oliphant, 1887.

and nephews. She also said that her brother had been connected with the Duke of York's expedition, and that her sister was the celebrated Mrs. Jordan. Oliphant finishes his story with, "Manfredonia was an odd place to come to to gather the moss of English history, but I really felt as if I had made a discovery when I learnt from this most venerable, and highly respectable old lady that Mrs. Jordan, the actress's real name was Thimbleby."

Oliphant certainly told this in all good faith, and was quite convinced of the good faith of the old lady, who was so used to her name that it could not occur to her that the family name was different; and though some critics may think it absurd to attach importance to the story, yet a student of biography knows the futility of putting aside any honest evidence without sifting it; and in this matter there is certainly room for conjecture. General circumstances lend to it an air of truth, for, early in the nineteenth century, when Napoleon was harassing Italy, many sub-consuls were appointed, especially for towns on the coast. So here arose a way of disposing of the tiresome Frank, and one which, by good management, it was easy to take. The Duke of Clarence, however, through whom it would have been worked, would not have risked, under the recurring state of public irritation against himself, the securing of even a minor appointment for a Bland, and the obvious method would have been to change the name. So a not inconceivable theory is that Frank, his wife, and his youngest sister, all under the name of Thimbleby, were comfortably shipped off to vegetate in the little town, whence they would find it very difficult to return. In any case, Frank is heard of no more as a hanger-on to Dorothy's fortunes, and the

relatives in Wales knew neither where nor when he died.

Thirty years after the English Sub-consul was appointed at Manfredonia, a stranger called upon Hester Bland at Trelethyn, and told her that he was her nephew, "a son (as I thought) of her brother, Francis Bland."¹ But Hester was getting old, seventy-five then, and she had never been clever, so she told him that he was not a Bland at all, and that her brother had no son. If the Thimbleby story is true, Frank had both son and daughter, after going to Italy.

Hester, with her annuity of £50 a year, probably settled down in Trelethyn before the beginning of 1800, for about this time, says the Welsh chronicles, three of Dorothy's girls were sent, under the care of an aunt, on a visit to their relatives there, staying a while in lodgings in St. Davids. As Hester was well-known by everyone there, and by the writer of the letter, stating this fact, it would have been recorded had she been the chaperone.

Nathaniel, who alone, needed nothing of Dorothy, lived his quiet, childless life at Trelethyn until his death on May 31, 1830, his wife surviving until 1852.

So, gradually, the burden of Dorothy's contemporary relatives slipped from her shoulders, and left her free to think of the children who needed so much, and for a year or two she had something like family peace. But she could never have felt quite secure with such a man as Clarence, though she would now have found it difficult to imagine her life in any other circumstances. Her love for the stage had waned, her ambition was satisfied, she had received adulation without stint, and she knew herself to be the best

¹ Family Letters.

comedy actress on the stage. So she took longer holidays before and after each confinement, and there were times when Drury Lane had cause to regret her absence. Yet the want of pence was too pressing for her to dream of retiring, even if her rivalry with Mrs. Siddons would have allowed her to desert the field of battle before that majestic actress did so.

As for William of Clarence, if at one time he had shown signs of an errant fancy, he now appeared to take his domesticity as a long-standing habit, desiring nothing else. He was too far from the throne—four lives—for him to be a person of national importance, and no one cared whether he passed his life by the side of a comedy actress, or whether he married an impecunious German princess. Indeed, his fond parents, at this time, probably preferred the actress, as with her there was no need to keep up state, and she could do much to help the family exchequer. Habit and intimacy had deepened Dorothy's feelings, so that the connection, begun as a bargain, had developed into one of warm affection. She wrote in one letter of her dislike to writing of herself, but when she was away from Clarence she wrote to him almost every day, indeed, sometimes twice a day. These were not letters in the usual sense, they were emanations of herself, as inevitable as the atmosphere, she wrote because she must, and because her whole heart and soul were wrapped up in that nestful of children that she had left behind at Bushy Park, and the man who guarded them.

William took naturally to the part of husband and father, as has been said; he read over and criticized all new plays that might, or did, offer her a part; he not only considered all offers from managers, but was some-

times the first person to be approached by a manager. His vanity still drew him to the Green Room when she performed, for he liked the more than respect which was offered him, the deference to his opinion however stupid or wild, which the actors gave; and he really believed himself a theatrical critic.

In the autumn, Kemble re-took the management of Drury Lane, for he hoped to secure a third share in the theatre, the money matters of which were being adjusted. He had not altered, he still believed that Shakespeare was the only dramatist worthy of his attention, and this, while it proved him to be a man of literary perception, also proved his weakness as a caterer for the public. But modern comedy had no fascination for him, and new plays he still hated; yet when Mrs. Jordan made her reappearance in March 1801, he had to agree to its being in *The Country Girl*, and, as manager, he must have been glad that the house was overflowing, and that she was received with shouts of delight; the papers next day reporting her as looking extremely well, and fascinating everyone with her winning gestures and sweet silvery voice.

But Kemble did not follow up this advantage. He next put on a tragedy, *Count Julian*, which was "full of tedious horrors," and then a play in which a ghost appeared three times, so that, at last, in place of a shuddering thrill, the spectred shade was greeted with hilarious laughter. Boaden says of him at this time, "Though Kemble had the best comic actress in the world in his company, he let Covent Garden take all the advantage of him"; and whenever he was at a loss he put on *A Bold Stroke For a Wife*, his stock piece "for all the damned among the plays." He loved spectacle almost as much as he did Shakespeare,

and was kept as before, almost without money. Thus, having come back to all the old disadvantages, and retaining all his old predilections, it is not surprising that the theatre closed in the middle of June, after a disastrous season.

In the spring of 1802, Dorothy did not appear in London until April 5th, beginning as usual in *The Country Girl*. "She never looked better, nor played with greater effect," said a writer in the *Monthly Mirror*. She was now forty, and seems to have retained her youthful appearance remarkably for that period. At Richmond that summer, it was judged that "time had made no inroads upon her superior talent," and one paper declared that her private character was so "that were we to divest it of its great public excellence, which is certainly unrivalled, the countenance and support that lady receives from the nobility and gentry round Richmond would not be unmerited."

She acted almost every summer at this town, and also at Margate, probably not being always quite punctual in arriving, as the following advertisement makes a special point of the fact that she was already in the town—

"MRS. JORDAN

is engaged to perform six nights and will make her first appearance this evening in the character of Letitia Hardy.

N.B.—Mrs. Jordan is arrived.

Theatre Royal, Margate.

This present evening

Monday, the 23rd of August, 1802,

will be presented the favourite comedy of

'THE BELLE'S STRATAGEM.'

Dorincourt—Mr. Russell."

The following letter to the manager of the Margate Theatre, arranging for this visit is interesting, in that it shows the terms Dorothy made at this time; terms which seem to be peculiarly complicated; and also that she acknowledges that she has "permission" to play, this could have been only from the Duke, as presumably no permission was necessary during the summer season, when Drury Lane was closed.

"Bushy House, Saturday. (Postmark 1802.)

"Mrs. Jordan's compliments to Mr. Shaw; if the following terms meet his approbation, she will perform at Margate six nights, at thirty guineas per night, the 7th, clear of all expenses, for her benefit; twenty guineas for her expenses; in consideration of this, she will perform the 8th night for ten pounds, for the proprietors. Mrs. Jordan will be obliged for an immediate answer, having got permission to play, and having many applications."

Before she ended her visit to the Kentish watering-place, an alarming accident occurred while *The Country Girl* was being acted, for in the window scene the flame from one of the lamps on the stage caught the train of her dress, and she was instantly in a blaze. Happily there were many people at hand to help, and she was not hurt, though one side of her clothing was almost consumed. The fright among the audience was great, but Dorothy insisted upon going through with the play, "though in a very depressed state." She ought, according to the fashion of the time, to have fainted, but was too unconsciously modern for that.

It was on May 25, 1802, that Tom King took his farewell of the public, and Dorothy played Lady Teazle with great vivacity to his Sir Peter. King had

been acting for fifty-four years, and had well-earned in his turn the title of the Father of the Stage. On this his last night, at the conclusion of the play, Charles Kemble led the old man to the front, and he tremulously stumbled through his farewell, being rapturously applauded by the touched audience. When he had finished, Mrs. Jordan, looking "absolutely beautiful from the interest she took," led him from the stage to a seat in the Green Room, where he had to listen to the usual kindly speeches, and accept a silver salver and cup, Dorothy raising the latter to his lips that he might consecrate it to his own use.

In May of the following year she helped another old actor, Charles Lee Lewis, to say farewell to the public at Covent Garden, playing Violante in *The Wonder*, with him. Mrs. Litchfield, whom she had once watched acting at Richmond with so much interest, was to recite "Alexander's Feast," and coming downstairs dressed for her part, she met Dorothy, who complained to her that she was suffering from nervousness, and taking Mrs. Litchfield's hand, she pressed it to her heart (which was generally in her mouth, says the facetious Boaden) to feel how it trembled. "Now you are a good, kind creature," she said, "will you take the book to the wing and prompt me if I should be at a loss?"

In the summer of 1802, Kemble again, and finally, resigned his management; making his last speech in Drury Lane Theatre on June 24th, after Dorothy had been playing Viola. He had been receiving fifty-five guineas a week, and was not then forty-five; but his desire to be owner of a theatre bearing his name made him break entirely with the house in the service of which he had spent so many years, and go to Covent Garden

with Mrs. Siddons and his brother Charles. To guide the theatre, a board of management had been established, and one of its five members was Sir Richard Ford, elected because of his position as a shareholder. Bannister, who believed in comedy, became acting-manager, and he and Mrs. Jordan were the two main props of the theatre, for Mrs. Crouch was also gone. "Time was when she possessed great powers of attraction, but now the period is past—past, never to return. She is getting old," announced a magazine. It was not age, for she was two years younger than Dorothy, but illness induced by drink said some, consumption said others—and she died abroad in 1805.

Towards the end of 1802, Dorothy was away from the theatre, not because of her own illness, but because of the serious illness of one of her children. She was engaged to play Miranda in *The Busybody* for the first time, and Bannister, fearful of losing her help, had his anxiety relieved when, early in December, she wrote to him—

"I am sure you will be glad to hear that my dear little girl is so much better to-night, that Sir John Hayes has pronounced her quite out of danger. I shall therefore be ready for to-morrow's rehearsal at eleven o'clock, and also to play Miranda. The Duke, as well as myself, is most obliged to you for your kind concern and attention, which I shall ever think of with pleasure and gratitude.

"Yours, D. JORDAN."

Serious domestic worry was beginning to press hardly upon her, for the affairs of the Duke were getting into a worse and worse condition, debt was

piling heavily upon him, and much as Dorothy might have liked to devote herself to her family, the need of money was too great for her to have the opportunity of doing so for long at a time. If Clarence did sometimes wish that she might stay at home, as is generally affirmed, he was very philosophical over her absences, and as Boaden said about the play *The Marriage Promise* by Allingham, which brought much grist to the mill—

“Mr. ‘Adviser’ did not in the least demur to Mrs. Jordan’s accepting her character in the present comedy.”

Another cause of growing worry was her eldest daughter, Frances, or Fanny as she was generally called, who was a troublesome person to manage. She was not at all beautiful; when, in 1815, she tried acting the critics variously pronounced her as “too deficient in personal appearance,” “face and figure an insuperable bar to success,” “she has but little to account for to nature in point of her personal appearance. Short in stature, lusty in person, and not very elegantly formed, nor blessed with very fascinating features.” This would have mattered little, in one way, had she been of a more sober character, but her whole history points to fickleness, hot temper and want of self-control.

However, Dorothy was ever hopeful about her girls, who, as long as they remained girls, were to her the best living. So when Frances came of age in 1803, she gained her desire of a house in London, one being chosen in Golden Square, where, with much festivity, she was settled, in touch with many of her mother’s friends. The other two girls, Dorothea and Lucy, lived sometimes with her and sometimes with their

mother at Bushy. Of the third girl, Hester, there is at this time no record.

If Dorothy was so extravagant as to allow her eldest daughter an income and a house in town, she had to pay for it, though there was evidence later that she had saved money for this purpose—which money had been lent to the Duke. So that her daughter might frivol in London, she started her spring season of 1804 as early as January 2, and acted almost without rest until the autumn. With her representation of Widow Cheerly in *The Soldier's Daughter*, she made both public and management happy, for the play produced £7500 in twenty nights, and this was partly owing to her ability to seize on popular fervour at the right moment. There was just then a tremendous enthusiasm for volunteering, and she electrified the audience by giving a soldier-like delivery of *Attention!* and speaking an epilogue describing, with much humour, the constitution of a female army of reserve.

Delaval and *Clara* Dorothy is said to have entirely saved from destruction, but *The Land we Live In* having been tremendously well-announced was, partly by reaction, found disappointing. The audience showed its scorn so actively that Dorothy most wisely refused to speak the Epilogue, which ran—

“‘Give you an Epilogue?—not I,’ says he,
‘An epilogue’s an *ex post facto* plea
That comes behind, when all the mischief’s done,
And play and poet, hooted, damned and gone.’”

She played at Bannister’s benefit at Drury Lane, and for that of Bannister Junior at Covent Garden, and in the summer went to Margate for eight nights, where, though there was “much genteel company in the boxes, the house was not well attended.” However, she carried away £208 as a result of the week’s work.

It was in the autumn of 1804 that England went foolish over a child of thirteen years, whose name was Henry West Betty, and who, having seen Mrs. Siddons in her deepest tragedy two years earlier, was so inspired with emulation, that he declared he should die if he were not an actor. His father encouraged him, gave him some training, and took him through Ireland, Scotland and the Provinces acting the chief characters in tragic plays. The novelty affected the public in an extraordinary way; so that Mr. Betty considered that only the most important theatres in the country were suitable as settings for his son's talents. Thus, in December 1804, he appeared at Covent Garden, and on the first night crowds gathered as early as one or two o'clock for the doors to open, people stretching in thick impenetrable columns across Bow Street. Those who had no hope of entering the building lined the streets and windows, the excitement being so great that a large number of police officers were gathered inside the theatre, and a detachment of guards outside. Many in the crowd fainted, and when at last the doors were opened there was danger of suffocation in the passages. People paid for boxes and arrived to find seats crammed with those who had climbed in over the front from other parts of the house, others paid their money for the pit, and on getting in, found it thronged to suffocation by folk who had taken more expensive places, and had climbed down from the boxes. It was uproar and confusion of the worst kind, for no consideration was given to anybody. The manager, Kemble, came on to speak the prologue, and was howled off, the discriminating audience wanted to see Betty, and Betty only would they see and hear.

Even the first act of the play, *Barbarossa*, in which the boy did not appear, was hissed, and cries made for him. When he was on the stage, everything he did or said was applauded rapturously, for only he existed for this demented audience.

Thomas Campbell was full of scorn for him, saying that, "The popularity of that baby-faced boy, who possessed not even the elements of a good actor, was a hallucination in the public mind, and a disgrace to our theatre history. . . . He received payment for his childish acting that was never accorded to Garrick or Siddons."

This infant played ten nights at Covent Garden, taking fifty guineas a night, and then went to Drury Lane; the twenty-eight nights he played there bringing to the theatre £17,210, snatching it from ruin, and causing his far-seeing father to double the price of his services. Neither Dorothy nor Mrs. Siddons could have any hope of working this miracle, and while the second retired from sight, and Kemble had a convenient illness, the first mildly joined in the general excitement. Whether she believed in Betty or not, the Duke of course did, and she was naturally influenced by him. Being a comedy actress, her prestige did not suffer—as that of the Kembles did so bitterly—equally with her pocket. So she went to see the boy, applauded him, and probably watched with amused indulgence the enthusiasm of that great dramatic critic, the Duke of Clarence. He made himself very busy over Betty, frankly taking him up, interviewing him at St. James's Palace, having portraits of him painted by James Northcote, the academician, sometimes driving him to the studio for

his sittings, and even remaining to watch the painting. One of these portraits, that in the character of young Norval, the Duke presented to young Betty, who had it engraved and dedicated to his patron.

For one season, Master Betty flourished like the green bay tree, but in the second season the changeable London audience began to laugh in the wrong places, and "he faded like a premature blossom," as Bannister said. However, while he acted, he amassed a sufficient fortune for him to live in comfortable style in the West End of London until he died of old age.

Drury Lane was in low water, and made desperate attempts to swell its exchequer by introducing one freakish child after another, one being four and a half years old, and even to the extent of engaging a whole troupe of German infants, and putting on a confident little girl named Fisher to act Little Pickle. The audience seems to have put up with it once in the spring of 1805, but when she appeared again in October, they yelled and hissed until the curtain was dropped, and not a word of the farce was heard. Dorothy herself seems to have been responsible for the introduction of a little boy, "another Roscius, who acted at Richmond that summer with some éclat." Slowly the craze died out, and the theatrical world recovered its sanity.

There was some disagreement between Dorothy and Bannister at Drury Lane at the beginning of 1805, over a play named *The Honeymoon*. She might have had the choice of two parts, but it seems that, not unlike actresses of a more recent date, she wished to focus attention upon herself, and, finding that these two parts were equally important, and that the honours must be

shared, she determined not to play at all; a decision which Bannister thought unjustifiable; however, Harriot Mellon came to the rescue, and was very successful.¹

Thus, her own benefit in April or May, and benefits for other actors made up her theatrical life for the first half of 1805. But her absence from the theatre just then was only partially due to the dispute, for on March 1 a son was born to her at Bushy House, to whom was given the name of Augustus; another baby, Augusta, having come into the world on November 20, 1803. This gave her twelve or thirteen children to think about, and it is no wonder that her attendances were less and less frequent at the theatre. Yet, in September 1805, she started again in *The Country Girl*, "the *chef d'œuvre* of this incomparable actress," performed Violante in *The Wonder* for some one's benefit, and was acting through to December.

¹ *Memoirs of Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans.* By Mrs. Cornwell Baron Wilson.

CHAPTER XIV

SLINGS AND ARROWS

"I frequently asked myself as the encore was reiterated, what in the name of reason could conduce to call forth such popular enthusiasm. That a few simple notes uttered by a very mediocre voice, unadorned by shake or cadence, should create a ferment bordering on enthusiasm, was, I confess, to me inexplicable, and what is more, will ever remain so ; at the same time, do not misunderstand me, the plaudits were not one jot the less welcome to my feelings."—DOROTHY JORDAN *on her own singing.*

THE Duke had struggled on with his monetary difficulties until early in 1806, and then he had a stroke of luck : for some vessels captured after the Battle of Trafalgar had brought a large sum to the King's treasury, and the King's sons were given a share of the spoil—Clarence, Kent, Cumberland and Sussex having each £20,000 wherewith to pay off some of their debts. This was a prize ; but early in 1806, Pitt having died in January, the Duke of Clarence's constant application for a larger income was met by an increase of £6000, bringing up his annual total to £18,000. He had further the pay of an Admiral of the Fleet and "the profitable situation of Ranger of Bushey Park." In addition there was Dorothy's income ; as *The Monthly Mirror*—grumbling over the increase—put it, he had the peculiar advantage of an excellent and economical housekeeper "who has *acted her part* both in *public* and *private* with deserved success." Thus, apart from Dorothy's money, he had not less than £20,000 a year, and probably more.

It is true that he had by bond settled a thousand a year upon the mother of his children, but what did that exactly mean ? Simply that she lived with him as

his wife, and shared in his surroundings. That she kept her income separately from his is scarcely to be credited, any more than it can be believed that he paid over to her a certain sum quarterly or yearly. The author of *The Great Illegitimates*, in a temporary fit of admiration, says that he was munificent to those around him and lived upon his income, and that Dorothy, instead of forcing him into dissipation and folly, led him into paths of domesticity, study and self-improvement, and that though she might be a somewhat expensive treasure she curbed prodigality to any dangerous extent; also, that his conduct endeared him to the whole neighbourhood in which he lived. Then it added that this esteem—in a slightly lesser degree—was extended to Dorothy, because it was known that she could not possibly be more honourably allied to Clarence “without breaking the sacred bar of an Act of Parliament.” Yet, after all this is said, the Duke was constantly in debt, and though he had an idea that to have his income increased by half would mean riches, he soon discovered that it meant little but the opportunity for a little more indulgence, and a great deal more debt. However, just at first this conjugal pair thought they were going to do wonders.

In the early part of the year, before the grant was made, Dorothy was quite prepared to continue her work, as is shown by the following letter written in February to Bannister the younger, who had had an attack of gout—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have been prevented by constant employment from answering your obliging notes. I am

sincerely sorry for your confinement, but trust it will soon end. We never know how to value a friend and great talents sufficiently till we are deprived of them. We have been long enough without *you* to make us subscribe now heartily to this old saying.

“The three tragedies you have sent me I have read this day, and, notwithstanding there is much pretty writing in the part you mention, I do not think I could do myself or the author any service by undertaking it. I think Mrs. Siddons would do great justice to it. I find laughing agrees with me much better than crying. Do come out soon and re-establish my health—I mean my theatrical health—which without you is certainly on the decline. My best compliments to Mrs. Bannister and your fair daughters.

“Yours very sincerely,

“D. JORDAN.”

But though Bannister got well again and took up his duties Dorothy forgot her theatrical health, and went no more on the stage, it being probably agreed that now she could afford to be idle, excepting when she gave her services, as on February 12, when she took prominent parts for the benefit of Tom King’s widow, for the old actor had not long survived his retirement.

The company gave *The School for Scandal* and *The Fair Circassian*, following these with a tableau named “Thalia’s Tears,” showing Parnassus in the background with Mrs. Jordan as Thalia sitting upon a pedestal in the centre weeping over Tom King’s urn. On each side stood actors dressed in the most admired of the old man’s characters, while Thalia, “in mellifluous tones and feeling energy of gesture,” recorded

King's virtues, after which lines were recited by the other performers and a dirge was sung by Braham, Kelly, Storace and Mrs. Bland.

Now we come to an incident which seems to point back to Dorothy's past. Boaden and the author of *The Great Illegitimates* emphasize the belief that, but for Ford and Clarence—Daly can scarcely be blamed to her—her life had been spotless. This was not altogether the general opinion in the first year of her life in London, when a report arose of the Prince of Wales's admiration for her, which, however, was contradicted by the observation that it "sprung from cunning; it was the puff of the day to put a feather in the lady's cap, and had the good effect of advertising her into popularity."

In the same article (in *The Town and Country Magazine*) it is frankly assumed that she had lovers: "Mrs. Tomboy has always been prudent in her amours. Her present favourite (Ford) is not the choice of love; his proximity to one of the proprietors of the theatre secures her a strong interest which she wisely considers of more real value than any immediate pecuniary advantage."

From this it might be gathered that Ford was not the first of Dorothy's town lovers, that there had been one other at least. However, if so, no direct evidence has been gathered of his personality or position; there are, however, the references made in various journals to the number of her children independent of the Fitzclarences. Four, said *The Morning Post*, in 1792, four, said *The Fashionable Cypriad* in 1798, and five, "one of whom died," said *The Great Illegitimates*. The young sister who was educated with her children by Mr. Lloyd in 1798 is another curious fact. On the

other hand, only the three girls Frances, Dorothea and Lucy are mentioned by Boaden. Now Boaden knew things which he did not tell, but very occasionally he told things which others did not know, and thus it is he who seems to give a clue to the mystery.

In 1806 a rumour arose that Mrs. Jordan's daughter had been left a fortune by an old gentleman on condition that she took the name of Betteworth. No one knew much about this, and no one was quite clear as to the condition; one said that the money had been offered to Dorothy, but that she refused to change her name, and her eldest daughter was suggested as a substitute; others that it had been bequeathed direct to the girl. No one is sure as to which girl benefited; private letters suggest it to be Dorothea or Lucy, and some newspapers declare it to be Frances, resting that belief in the words "Mrs. Jordan's eldest daughter."

There is no doubt of the fact that there was money left in some way, for early in 1806 Dorothy took a house on Twickenham Common, known then as Gyfford Lodge. The common was a common then, and not a small triangular green. Gyfford Lodge—largely rebuilt, and now spelt Gifford—still stands, its gardens contracted, and surrounded by a high wall in place of the low wooden palings of a century ago. In this house the Marchioness of Tweeddale had died in 1788, and General Gunning, a brother of the second set of beautiful Miss Gunnings, lived there for a time. It was let to Dorothy for £50 a year—equal, perhaps, to £150 at the present day—but in 1807 she got it reduced to £45, the rates being—I cannot refrain from saying "Happy rate-payers!"—but a shilling in the pound.

The house secured, decorating and furnishing must have been an absorbing matter, and then on July 12 a great coming-out or coming-of-age party was given in it by Miss Bettsworth. And as Frances had come out long before, and had come of age to a fanfare of trumpets three years earlier, when she was settled in Golden Square, she may be ruled out of the matter, for she could scarcely have repeated the process in a new house, among the old friends. Here are some of the contemporary accounts of the party. *The Sun* of July 13 reported that, "Miss Bettsworth, Mrs. Jordan's eldest daughter, gave a splendid rural fête on Monday last at Gyfford Lodge, Twickenham. The grounds were decorated with great taste, splendour and beauty, but the weather was not very favourable to entertainments out of doors. The whole of the house, but particularly the great saloon, was adorned and illumined in a very brilliant and elegant manner; a military band afforded much pleasure, and some rustic sports varied and enlivened the scene. There was a magnificent supper about twelve o'clock after dancing, and Mrs. Jordan presided over the whole. The Duke of Clarence was, of course, of the party, and a very large part of the fashionable circles was present. A vast crowd from neighbouring villages assembled round the mansion and gardens, and were happy spectators of this superb and beautiful scene of rural festivity."

A further paragraph added that Miss Bettsworth assumed that name on account of considerable property which had been bequeathed her on that condition, and described her as "a very amiable and accomplished young lady."

The Morning Post of Monday, July 14, notices that

to the fête six hundred guests were invited, including the Dowager Countess of Buckinghamshire (Mrs. Hobart of the letter) and the Earl of Massereene, that the breakfast was given at 4.30 in four tents on the lawn, and that ten thousand people from the country-side stood round the railings to see the favourite actress entertaining her friends.

One daily paper announced in its theatrical gossip that at Richmond, notwithstanding the heavy rain, a grand *fête champêtre* was given by Mrs. Jordan on the coming-of-age of her eldest daughter.

It was, however, Boaden's paper, *The Daily Advertiser and Oracle*, which gave a remarkable note to the affair: "The father of Miss Bettsworth, Mrs. Jordan's eldest daughter, died not long ago, and has left the young lady a very handsome fortune; it is not flattery to say he has not bequeathed her more than she deserves, for she is a very amiable young woman and no 'spoilt child.'" Of this matter the writer of *The Great Illegitimates* knew little, and simply reported that it was said "that an elderly gentleman named Bettsworth at this juncture tendered Mrs. Jordan a very ample fortune in the event of her taking his name, and becoming his representative."

Boaden, the only other important chronicler of Dorothy's life, concealed his knowledge under, "I understand some old gentleman of the name of Bettsworth offered Mrs. Jordan a very handsome fortune to take his name and become his representative."

Search has revealed no Bettsworth will or deed bequeathing money to any of the Jordans; it has, however, shown that on November 27, 1805, there died at Swanmere House, near Salisbury, William Augustus Bettsworth, aged 70, formerly Judge Advocate of

his Majesty's Fleet and many years an eminent attorney at Portsea. This gentleman had no children; his will was somewhat curious, too, for though in it he leaves to his mother, wife and brother a great quantity of landed property, no money at all is mentioned, which leads to the natural supposition that he had already disposed of his money.

There is no proof in this that he was once connected with Mrs. Jordan, but the date of his death was just at the right period, and the affair must be left at that.

The curious point is that Miss Bettsworth disappears entirely from the story after this, only the three girls known as Jordan, both before and after the event, being mentioned in Boaden's *Life*; thus that eldest girl, said to have been named Hester and generally regarded as a Ford daughter, probably took her money with her name, and was henceforth little involved in the fortunes of her mother's family.

Frances was occupying the house in Golden Square for several years, which is proved by an undated letter written by Dorothy on paper made in 1805 concerning a dispute about a harp.

"Mrs. Jordan's compliments to Mr. Hyde, she was very sorry she was not at home when he called in Golden Square, as she wished to come to some settlement with regard to the harp she was to receive as a remuneration for a song she gave him permission to print on these terms, she has before acquainted Mr. Hyde that the instrument was so very bad that she never could make use of it in consequence of its having been of unseasoned wood; the first week she had it it burst, even the brass that was connected with the machinery, and has remained in that state ever

since, as every workman she applied to mend it declared that it was never good for anything. Mrs. Jordan is fearful that this statement, that has been laid before Mr. Hyde two or three times, has escaped his recollection, for she is certain that when she gave the preference to his house he meant to have given her a good instrument, and so far a return for a song which was very popular and consequently very profitable, and for which she could have been very handsomely paid. Mrs. Jordan requests he will take this into consideration, and she makes no doubt of the result being perfectly satisfactory to her."

The Bettsworth party was not the only one which made a sensation this summer in social circles, for when the Duke of Clarence attained his forty-first year in August he, too, gave a party. He had done the same before without attracting notoriety, but unfortunately for his peace of mind much advertisement was given to it this year, probably through Dorothy's own thoughtless agency in allowing such full reports to appear in the papers. These passed for the moment without criticism; but William Cobbett was editor of *The Political Register*, a man whose soul was burning within him at the hardships of the poor, and who had been deeply influenced by the French Revolution. He had no love for princes, and the lives of the King's sons were scarcely likely to give him any respect for them; he had also been keenly opposed to the grant to Clarence. So in September 1806 he reprinted the report of the August birthday party, adding to it a bitter and contemptuous criticism. He was a journalist as well as a reformer, and if he could have eliminated from his attack the trick of exaggeration and false

conclusion his article would have been more crushing. As it was, it was more likely to provoke anger than anything else. The report is as follows—

“The Duke of Clarence’s birthday was celebrated with much splendour in Bushy Park on Thursday. The grand hall was entirely new fitted up with bronze pilasters and various marble imitations; the ceiling very correctly clouded, and the whole illuminated with some brilliant patent lamps, suspended from a beautiful eagle. The dining-room in the right wing was fitted up in a modern style with new elegant lamps at the different entrances. The pleasure ground was disposed for the occasion, and the servants had new liveries. In the morning the Dukes of York’s and Kent’s bands arrived in caravans; after dressing themselves and dining, they went into the pleasure grounds and played alternately some charming pieces. The Duke of Kent’s played some of the choruses and movements from Haydn’s Oratorio of the Creation, arranged by command of his Royal Highness for a band of wind instruments. About five o’clock the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Kent, Sussex and Cambridge, Colonel Paget, etc., arrived from reviewing the German Legion. After they had dressed for dinner they walked in the pleasure grounds, accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, Earl and Countess of Athlone and daughter, Lord Leicester, Baron Hotham and Lady, Baron Eden, the Attorney General, Colonels Paget and M’Mahon, Serjeant Marshall, and a number of other persons. At seven o’clock the second bell announced the dinner, when the Prince took Mrs. Jordan by the hand, led her into the dining-room, and seated her at the head of the table. The Prince took his seat at her right hand,

and the Duke of York at her left; the Duke of Cambridge sat next to the Prince, the Duke of Kent next to the Duke of York, and the Lord Chancellor next to his Royal Highness. The Duke of Clarence sat at the foot of the table. It is hardly necessary to say the table was sumptuously covered with everything the season could afford. The bands played on the lawn, close to the dining-room window. The populace were permitted to enter the pleasure grounds to behold the Royal Banquet [all of whom partook of the royal bounty, says another report], while the presence of Messrs. Townsend, Sayers and Macmanus, preserved the correct decorum. The Duke's numerous family were introduced and admired by the Prince, the Royal Dukes and the whole company; an infant in arms, with a most beautiful white head of hair, was brought into the dining-room by the nursery maid. After dinner the Prince gave 'the Duke of Clarence,' which was drunk with three times three; the Duke then gave 'The King,' which was drunk in a solemn manner. A discharge of cannon from the lawn followed 'The Queen and the Princesses,' 'the Duke of York and the Army.' His Royal Highness's band then struck up his celebrated march."

The white-haired boy would have been Augustus. As to the cannon which were fired so joyfully, they are still at Bushy House guarding the main entrance. But before Mr. Glazebrook took his wonderful Laboratory there they served a very undignified but useful purpose, their ends being embedded deeply at either side of the front door, and lamps fixed into their yawning mouths. To return to Cobbett's criticism—

He began by pretending that the whole story was a lie, it being reprinted by him solely that the Duke

might deny it publicly. Then the Duke of York's marches came in for pointed satire, for it was barely half-a-dozen years since he had been obliged to march out of Belgium. But Cobbett reserved his fury of contempt for the musical incident—

"The representing of the oratorio of *The Creation*, and arranged by the Duke of Kent, too, applied to the purpose of ushering in the *numerous family* of the Duke of Clarence, thus representing the Duke of Kent as employed in an act whereby the procreation of a brood of illegitimate children is put in comparison with the great work of the Almighty is, in this writer's opinion, an act of the most insidious disloyalty, and of blasphemy the most daring."

Now the playing of the selections took place in the afternoon and in the garden, while the babies were not introduced to the dining guests until after seven in the evening; thus in the minds of the arrangers of the fête the two events were in no ways connected, and neither blasphemy nor insidious disloyalty existed save in Cobbett's somewhat crooked reasoning. Would God—"whatever God there be"—consider a lusty young family such as Dorothy's something to be despised, even though certain formulas had not been uttered over the parents? A marriage ceremony is a protective rite, invented by society; children are a work of nature and—it may be—therefore the most important part of the affair in the eyes of the Creator.

Cobbett proceeded that it was foully to slander his Royal Highness to declare that he had been guilty of the crime of bringing bastards into the world; and then turned his attention upon Dorothy. While speaking of the Duke he had retained a mock respect-

ful air, but as soon as he spoke of her he fell into vulgarity; for humanist as he was, he evidently held that the sin of the man who sins is venial compared with the equal sin of the woman. He said—

“ This representation and accusation I must and do find false (that this dinner was held), and I am confirmed in this my opinion, when I hear the same writer assert that the Prince of Wales took *Mother Jordan* by the hand and, in the presence of a *Countess*, a *Countess's daughter* and a *Baroness*, seated her at the head of the table, taking his place upon her right hand, his royal brothers arranging themselves, according to their rank on both sides of the table, the *post of honour* being nearest *Mother Jordan*, who, the last time I saw her, cost me eighteen pence in her character of Nell Jobson.”

If the articles in *The Bon Ton, Town and Country* and kindred magazines may be credited, there were many high-born ladies at the period, who were wives and mothers and yet notorious for the looseness of their morals, and compared with whom Dorothy was a good and respectable woman, yet they went free of the reformer's biting words; but, then, an actress was but a vagabond, after all, and, as Dorothy often proved, could be thrashed with impunity for the sins of the world.

Twenty-six years later, in 1832, when the Reform Bill was agitating all politicians, and a multitude of people who were no politicians, Cobbett reprinted this article as an attack upon the Earl of Munster, Dorothy's eldest son, who was accused of influencing the King against reform; and the article was then headed *The Fitzjordans*, part of the introductory paragraph being: “ Twenty-six years ago, when these

people were babies, I foresaw the consequences that might arise from their existence."

Never again was there any public advertisement made of Dorothy's festivities at Bushy House, and when the Duke's birthdays came round only the names of men were reported as present.

But if purists were concerned in throwing odium upon Dorothy's name, there were many needy people who were ready to bless her. Pierce Egan, in his entertaining book, *The Life of an Actor*, gives a story which proves this. Strolling players attended at fairs to make their harvest, often a poor enough one; and Egan was in the habit of taking his company to Twickenham Fair. In 1807 he determined to have one night extra—a private night he calls it—after the fair closed; so he sent out bills announcing *Douglas*, and *The Miller of Mansfield*. The performance was to be given on their temporary stage on Twickenham Common, nearly two miles from Richmond Theatre, at which Messrs. Copeland and Russell's company was acting. It was customary with Egan to invite his people to a picnic on Eelpie Island the day after the fair, so they were all gathered there eating eel pies and drinking ale and "as merry as could be," when a note was brought to them from the Richmond managers, saying that a benefit was taking place that night at their theatre, and if Egan dared to perform they would apply to a magistrate and have the whole company locked up.

The laws concerning theatres were stringent, and yet more honoured in the breach than in the observance; but they could be put into force both easily and cruelly. The players at a fair were frankly vagabonds and, according to law, in their right place; but as soon

as they began to act independently they—like dust—were but matter in the wrong place, something to be removed. Thus this threat was a serious thing; yet Egan, well warmed with ale, only laughed and returned answer that if he were taken up, it should be by the authority of a magistrate and not by *two vagrants* like himself. However, he had not drunk too much to have his wits about him, and he went off at once to Mrs. Jordan, “that justly celebrated and much lamented actress,” who was then at Gyfford Lodge. She heard his story, and could scarcely believe that Copeland and Russell would be guilty of such meanness; yet as she knew the handwriting well she promised to use her influence, and advised Egan to go back to his company and perform without any fear. She also promised to make up a party, and if she could not come herself, to send some of her children. She kept her word, and the evening passed successfully and without mishap, though the next morning Copeland and Russell tried to retaliate by engaging Egan’s chief actor, who, however, loyally refused to leave his company until the end of the season.

The following undated letter to some journalist will also serve to show how keen were Dorothy’s sympathies, and how ready she was to do good in secret fashion.

“DEAR SIR,

“Perhaps the same pen which so feelingly described the distress of an unfortunate family would, on perusal of the enclosed, exert itself once more, in the same way, and through the same channel. I will pay for the articles, and should be happy if by this means and my own exertions I could be enabled

to get a few pounds for this unhappy writer, whose situation I know to be *exactly what is described*. I will not run the risk of offending you by apologies, the motive will, I am sure, be sufficient to procure me pardon. I will send you, if requisite, respectable references.

“Yours obliged and sincerely,
“DORA JORDAN.”

Through the autumn of 1806 Clarence and Dorothy kept to their decision that there should be no more acting, and on March 20, 1807, their last child, Amelia, was born. But in the spring of that year she was on the stage occasionally if not constantly; for in January she was in a new play, *Something to Do*, which was a failure, and in April she was again Widow Cheerly in *The Soldier's Daughter*; but she did not take seriously to it again until September, when the need for money had once more become pressing.

That the elder girls did not marry was a great disappointment. Frances, plain, giddy and unintellectual, was a difficult problem for the mother who loved her children so deeply that she was prepared to make any sacrifice for them, and who feared that if she died they would be penniless. This, of course, should not have been, for earlier in her career she had saved money with the express intention, it was said, of dowering these girls. But since then all her earnings had been spent and her savings lent, and though her income was very much smaller than the Duke's, it is doubtless true that he had had as much advantage of it as she.

A further source of trouble was her increasing tendency to stoutness, for she felt that the particular parts

in which she was strongest would suffer from such a physical defect, and she made strenuous efforts to reduce her size. So when she began work again in September it was noticed that she was thinner, but *The Satirist* deprecated the fact on the plea that "where violent, artificial modes are adopted to diminish bulk the countenance is the sufferer; so with Mrs. Jordan, she does not look so well in the face as we have seen her, but by dint of exercise the *tout ensemble* is so far reduced as to make the boy's disguise not quite unnatural. She played it as usual with the greatest spirit, and was greeted with warm applause."

Through the following years many were the comments made upon Dorothy's size, yet it could not have been so extraordinary, for in 1813, when she was supposed to be enormous, Leslie the artist wrote, on seeing her in *As You Like It*, "I had been taught to expect an immensely fat woman, and she is but moderately so. Her face is still very fine; no print that I ever saw of her is much like. Her performance of Rosalind was, in my mind perfect, though I am convinced the character from its nature did not call forth half Mrs. Jordan's powers."

Having started work in earnest Dorothy was in the theatre several times a week, and then came a sudden break. On Saturday, October 12, she was playing in the *Wedding Day*, and though feeling ill herself she had dragged Mathews through his part, for he "played like a man dreaming of something he did not like: like a canary bird singing in the dome of St. Paul's, so faint that he could not be understood." Dorothy was loudly encored in her song of "In the Dead of Night," and sang it through twice "as exquisitely as

ever." "Before she had finished," said *The Courier*, "she was affected by a severe pain between the shoulders, which struck into her chest, and only her great spirits and firmness could have made her finish the play. Early on the Sunday morning, after coughing, a considerable quantity of blood came from her chest, and it was evident that she had broken a blood vessel. Dr. Blane took twelve ounces of blood from her arm by lancet and eight ounces by cupping, thus relieving the pain, but reducing her so low that she is forbidden to take anything but cold water." On the Monday she was much better, though the pain was still severe, and she was—somewhat naturally seeing the remedy employed—very weak. Those who had hoped to see her as Peggy that night were disappointed, and for ten days she did not appear.

The Duke was staying at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, and seems not to have hastened his return unduly, for he did not arrive at St. James's until the following Saturday. Then he stayed only long enough to change horses before setting out for Bushy Park. Dorothy went for a short drive on the Friday, and on the Tuesday, much too soon, returned to the theatre, having denied that a ruptured blood vessel was the cause of her illness. She showed great languor on her appearance, but gradually recovering her spirits she seemed in her usual health before the end of the evening. The next Saturday she played Lady Racket in *Three Weeks After Marriage* to a house which was said to have scarcely a person of rank or fortune absent, and at its close she got into her carriage, having arranged to drive straight back to Bushy House with the Duke. But pain in her chest again became acute, and she went instead to her town home in

Mortimer Street (for she had by then left Somerset Street) and to bed, suffering from a return of the inflammation. The Duke also stayed in town, and she being better on the Monday, he took her home with him. Again it was denied that this new indisposition was a relapse, and these denials of the seriousness of her illnesses indicate that Dorothy was afraid of being regarded as weakly, afraid that any strong impression should get abroad that her physical powers were declining; in fact, it hinted at some desperate need for her to keep her place in her profession. In any case so keen was she to make money that she was on the boards again in seven days, and from that time was acting all through the winter.

There was some reason for her fear of finding herself put upon the shelf, for many were the hints that the public would soon lose her, thus *The Monthly Mirror*, declaring that her appearance proclaimed her the genuine offspring of Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, went on to say—

“In her undress, when skipping and turning round, with her hand on her heart and exposing her shape, ‘if shape it might be called that shape had none,’ we really beheld her with more pain than pleasure. This sensation probably arose from a fear that the hour is not far distant when she will be compelled to relinquish altogether this, her inimitable line.”

But whatever might be said about her size, there were no murmurs about her singing; and she captivated the audience with “Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes” and “A Shepherd Once had Lost His Love.”

From the middle of December she had two or three weeks’ holiday, spending Christmas with most of her children, while the Duke went on a visit to Berkeley

Castle, taking with him George and Sophia. On their way back they stayed for two days at Buscot Park in Berkshire, and arrived home about January 15. This is but one evidence that far from repudiating his children, as Cobbett suggested, the Duke was thoroughly proud of them, and often took them about with him. Mrs. Calvert noted in her diary for 1804,¹ "that the Duke went to the Pavilion for the Prince's birthday and had two natural children with him—fine boys. Mrs. Jordan is the mother." A year or two later she speaks of meeting the Duke and his eldest daughter out at dinner.

Clarence was already making plans for his children's careers, though there are indications that Dorothy's solicitude for her elder and less fortunate children somewhat irked him. The Hanoverian boy who had claimed his parentage in 1790 had been placed in the Navy, and was under the command of Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge upon the *Blenheim*, a worn-out ship, which was, however, thought good enough for the Commander of the East Indian Seas, and which foundered in a cyclone off Madagascar in 1807 with all lives lost. William wrote to Admiral Collingwood in May 1808: "Though I have lost one son on board the *Blenheim*, I have just started another with my old friend and shipmate Keates, and I have another breeding up for the quarter-deck. . . . I took my second son to Deal, which gave me an opportunity of visiting the different ships there."

This second son, who was started off from Deal to join Keates, was Henry, who began life on board, though he later became a soldier. Augustus also began in the Navy, only to end as a "fisher of men,"

¹ *An Irish Beauty of the Regency*, by Mrs. Warenne Blake.

but Adolphus was probably the one who was breeding up for the quarter-deck. The eldest boy, George, became a Cornet in 1807, and in October 1808 his fond father took him to Portsmouth, where he embarked with his regiment, the 10th Dragoons, for Spain. There at Corunna he became aide-de-camp to General Slade, and in 1809-11 he was in the Peninsula with the Marquis of Londonderry, Wellington's Adjutant-General.

CHAPTER XV

DAME GOSSIP AND DOROTHY

“Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt!”—*Hamlet*.

“It’s well I have a husband a-coming, or i’ cod, I’d marry the baker, I wou’d so!”—MISS HOYDEN.

DOROTHY’s work in 1808 began on January 8 with *The Country Girl*, and scattered through books and papers are many indications of her acting, her health, her dress, “blue and silver, very pretty and becoming,” her popularity and her weak points. “On Monday we were charmed at Drury Lane with Mrs. Jordan in *Three Weeks after Marriage*. I admire her so much I could forgive the Duke of Clarence anything,” wrote Marianne Stanhope.¹ In January Miss Berry noted in her diary: “Mrs. Jordan bringing out too often her oyster woman notes in *Violante*, which destroys all the effect of her otherwise captivating singing.” And the succeeding month the same playgoer recorded that “her Nell is incomparable, but she was not in high spirits.”

“Public love in this instance is staunch, and Miss Peggy, on the verge of fifty, is still able to give the play an irresistible charm,” said another critic. Even the papers which commented most on Dorothy’s size always salved their criticisms with affectionate praise. On May 26, for instance, when she played for Miss Pope’s farewell benefit, *The Theatrical Inquisitor* remarked, “This great actress should take a hint from the race so judiciously run by Miss Pope and begin to

¹ *Letter-bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer Stanhope*. By A. M. W. Stirling.

think of suiting her characters to her form and age—the converse is a dangerous trial. She has outgrown her *frocks!*"

Another journal, criticizing her performance in June, was somewhat muddled in style and not quite so kind in the following paragraph: "Mrs. Jordan's Viola and Beatrice were, as usual, full of the delices of genuine acting. Her dress in Viola cannot be described—it need only to be seen to be felt. Her white breeches (small-clothes it would be unjust to call them) and white jacket, which, through a red net in which she was caught, looked behind like the tail of a short skirt, were very affecting to the whole house."

And in September we read that she strongly exhibits the superiority of mind over matter, "for she no sooner opens her mouth and displays her genius than you forget the mortal incumbrances. Such intellectual powers compensate for her form—it is as broad as it is long." But Dorothy, feeling that her best powers were shown in her early and most popular characters, could never be induced to alter either the characters or their dresses.

On April 11, 1808, Dorothy began a series of yearly visits to Bath which were always successful, acting until May 2. In one letter to the Duke from that town she wrote: "I should be sorry to be obliged to give up Bath for *various reasons*. I shall be glad when Thursday is over. I am very fickle on these occasions, and always grow tired of the audience before they seem to weary of me. Great crowds are expected at the theatre to-morrow—*my night*, and, thank God, the last night but one. On Thursday I finish with *The Country Girl*. We are to have a very grand dinner at Canons, and it would make you laugh to hear the

manceuvring there has been by several people to get invited."

After this she was again at Drury Lane, the season closing in June, but on the last night Dorothy was away because of illness, and all through the remainder of the year she had attacks of illness which constantly interfered with her work. Thus, early in August she was ill, but by the 24th was well enough to delight all the fashionables in the neighbourhood of Richmond, who made a "splendid overflow" to witness her Belinda in *All in the Wrong*. The Duke of Clarence, too, was ill with gout, which Dorothy described as "the old periodical attack."

This summer Frederick Jones—who, with Lord Westmeath, had started the "gentleman's theatre" about ten years earlier in Dublin, in rivalry with Daly—was in London negotiating for the purchase of Drury Lane (a bargain which was never completed), and he was in and out of the theatre for a month. It may have been then that he persuaded Mrs. Jordan to engage herself to Dublin for the summer of 1809, an engagement from which both hoped to profit materially.

In September, with renovated health and spirits, she started again at Drury Lane, where Tom Sheridan was now manager, and Wroughton deputy. But in October illness claimed her, and her absence was lamented in November, as the new comedy, *The Chances*, required all her vivacity to give life to a tame and insipid piece.

It was not until the 28th of December that she really began a long spell of acting. Yet, though at work, she managed to take her children to the pantomime, writing to the Duke, who was absent, that "The boys

were delighted with *Robinson Crusoe*. I think it was tolerably well got up. The house was very full last night; the new comedy does not come out till Thursday." This comedy was *Man and Wife*, written by S. J. Arnold and put on on January 5, 1809; in this she took the part of Helen Worry, and successfully kept a poor play going for twenty nights. On the 21st of February she was acting, and the next night the swan song of Drury Lane was sung in an opera, *The Circassian Bride*, the theatre being totally destroyed by fire on the 24th.

It may well be asked why Dorothy was so feverishly anxious for work, and the only answer can be that it was for her daughter's benefit.

Some time in 1808 Dorothy had the pleasure—perhaps the dubious pleasure—of marrying her eldest girl Frances with one named Thomas Alsop, who was a clerk of the delivery of small arms in the Ordnance Office, a post soon after abolished. Frances, then in her twenty-sixth year, was giddy and irresponsible, with little of the repose of Vere de Vere, and it is open to wonder whether it was merely a coincidence that within two minutes' walk of Gyfford Lodge (which was given up before July 1808), and where for two years the elder girls had lived, a hostel stood in four acres of ground of whom the owner was a man named William Alsop. Nothing is known of Thomas Alsop, and he may have been the innkeeper's son. Doubtless Frances was promised a dowry of £10,000, as were her sisters. According to the agreement made between Dorothy and the Duke in 1791, the latter was responsible for part of this, but how much was ever paid it is difficult to say; certainly the various sons-in-law never did receive the sums they were led to expect when they

married, and the nature of the settlements may be gathered from that made upon Dorothea, whose wedding was celebrated in the following March, also with a clerk in the Ordnance.

In reference to this latter wedding *The Gentleman's Magazine* made a curious mistake, publishing in the marriage columns the two following items, one after the other—

“ 1809. March 4th. Dorothea Maria Ford of Bushy Park married F. E. March, Esq., of the Ordnance Office, the Tower.

“ March 6th. Mr. Fitzgerald, son of Lord Henry Fitzgerald, to Miss Ford, daughter of Mrs. Jordan.”

In the next number, of course, a correction appeared, pointing out that F. E. March, Esq., and Mr. Fitzgerald were one and the same person, and that Miss Jordan and Miss Ford were also the same, the mistake arising from the facts that Mr. March was the natural son of Lord Henry Fitzgerald, while Miss Ford was the natural daughter of Mrs. Jordan. The bride's address was given elsewhere as Park Place, St. James, which was the home of the newly married Frances Alsop.

There is one good thing to be said of those loose, bad days, when the standard of morality was lower than at present, and that was that the natural children were far better seen after by the most responsible parent, the father, than they are now. The men had no shame in such connections, regarding them as only to be expected, and they did very often acknowledge and provide for these children of irregular birth. Mrs. Jordan, I think, made a mistake when she entirely

relieved Richard Ford of all responsibility for his children; though, on the other hand, that may have been one of the conditions upon which that gentleman insisted when he found himself superseded.

But to return to the marriage settlement—a portentous vellum document consisting of four pages, each about two feet square, stamped with seals worth £4 10s., dated March 3, 1809—described in the most flourished of flourishing writing as—

“Settlement on the marriage of Frederick Edward March, Esq., with Miss Dorothea Maria Jordan,” and it betrays some curious things concerning the monetary arrangements between Dorothy and Clarence.

The five parties to it were in the following order: Frederick Edward March, Dorothea Jordan of Mortimer Street, Dorothea Maria Jordan, spinster, of Mortimer Street, H.R.H. William Henry, Duke of Clarence, and Thomas Alsop and William Bignall, trustees.

By this deed Dorothy undertook to provide the sum of £2000 as a marriage portion, and a further sum of £200 annually, thus making up the £10,000 she always intended to give each one. Of the £2000 Dorothy had already paid one, which had been invested in the purchase of £1,484 4s. 6d. in three per cent. consolidated annuities. The second thousand was paid by a bond or obligation in writing given under the seal of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, “whereby His said Royal Highness, in consideration of the sum of £1000 heretofore advanced to him by the said Dorothea Jordan which he doth hereby acknowledge, hath, at her request, testified by his executing these presents, etc., etc.”

It is needless to say that when a comparatively

simple affair of this kind is wrapped up in twelve or sixteen square feet of writing it is not altogether easy to get at its meaning, but the above is clear, as is also the fact that the Duke could not pay such a sum as £1000 down, but undertook to pay it in quarterly instalments of £62 10s., with interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, this sum to be completed in four years from the 26th day of the following July; and for the better securing of this two life insurance policies were taken out in the Westminster Life Insurance Society in the names of the trustees, whereby the sum of £500 should be paid to them if the Duke died within two years. This document was signed in the presence of the lawyer, Charles H. Ware of Gray's Inn, by all but one of the trustees, William Bignall, who signed after having had it duly stamped.

From this paper it is made evident how very true were the reports then current concerning the debts and difficulties under which the Duke was labouring. It also hints at one reason for the quarrels which were said to rise frequently between him and Dorothy. If she pinned him down in this way to paying her something back on account of the money he owed her, he must have felt very sore, and she probably only exacted it by great persistency.

It is said that in the letters from the Duke to Dorothy, which Mrs. Alsop threatened to publish after her mother's death, there was evidence that the former had received loans from the latter, amounting in all to £30,000. If this was so there can be little wonder when Dorothy wished to portion her daughters, and found herself able to do so partially only by the most strenuous and continuous work, that she should demand back some of that money which was definitely

lent, especially as she regarded that money as put aside for the very purpose of portioning these girls.

Information about quarrels not only leaked out but was published in some Sunday and gossiping papers, copies of which no longer exist, and the slanderous comments included her girls as well as herself. Dorothy was described as a match-making mamma—surely no great crime!—only equal to the Duchess of Gordon, a lady of whom it was said that she went over to Paris in pursuit of the Duke of Bedford, whom she desired as a husband for one of her daughters, and triumphantly brought him home to be married. There was also a widespread rumour that the Bushy household was to be broken up, even that a parting had taken place.

Concerning the gossip over the marriages, Dorothy wrote the following letter to James Boaden, one in which the mother's heart speaks plainly—

“DEAR SIR,

“Having frequently experienced your kindness in assisting to do away any unfair impression, your candour, believe me, cannot be better employed [in the Press] than in the defence of three as good and virtuous girls as ever existed. It would be painful to me and unnecessary to you to mention the cruel and infamous reports for some time in circulation, and to the extent of which I was really a stranger till last week. To say it has made me ‘sick at heart’ is saying little.

“I remain, your obliged humble servant,
“DORA JORDAN.”

In many ways this year was one of terror both to Clarence and to Dorothy, for on February 1 began the

Parliamentary investigation into the conduct of the Duke of York for wrong use of his military patronage. His mistress, Mary Ann Clarke, had, under his protection, taken a great house in Gloucester Place, and been remarkably extravagant, keeping horses, carriages, a number of servants and three chefs, and all on the *promise* of one of the Royal Dukes of an income of £12,000! To a woman of her quality a promise was for a time as good as a fulfilment so long as there was credit to be obtained, but when that time had passed she began to feel the pressure, which she lightened by taking money from officers who wanted promotion; in plain language by using the Duke as a tool for the selling of commissions, and the evidence at the trial pointed to the fact that more than one Duke benefited as well as herself from the sales.

There were eight charges against the Duke, all of which were decided to be not proven, though naturally there was no hesitation concerning the guilt of Mary Clarke. However, she was not upon her trial in actual fact, and she did not care in the least what people said of her, so she kept a cool courage, made herself look as charming as possible, and was not at all frightened when being examined at the bar of the House. She became indeed the heroine of the affair, being cheered in the streets on occasions; and York, in spite of the finding, was the person who felt it necessary to hide his head and resign his post of Commander-in-Chief, which meant the relinquishment of about £6000 per annum.

This affair considerably scared the King and Queen and all the Royal Family. It was one thing for the good Queen to encourage her young sons to find mistresses, or even to hunt round for such for them, with

the kindly, motherly intention of keeping them out of temptation and danger; but it was quite another matter when such mistresses, instead of allowing themselves meekly to be kicked out of the way when done with, tried to save their own skins by independent action. Mrs. Fitzherbert had been tiresome in a dignified manner, but then she made so much of the marriage ceremony, and was so respectably connected as well as strong-minded, that the Royal parents grudgingly accepted her at her own valuation.

They had, however, no love for Dorothy, who had been most inconsiderate in having so many children, a matter which much annoyed them as well as John Bull, and as they feared that composite person they began to wish that she could be swept out of their existence, but they found it hard to invent a method of getting rid of her. Clarence himself was undoubtedly distressed, as indeed were all the brothers, for they knew themselves to be sinners in money affairs, and they never could tell when some meddlesome paper would not turn into a bludgeon for their chastisement.

Thus this affair of Mary Clarke was in itself enough to cause irritable temper at Bushy House, and when later that clever dame had the Duke of York's letters to her printed in a neat volume and much advertised, though they were never published, it was confusion worse confounded. Clarence had written hundreds of letters to Dorothy, letters which would be a revelation of many hidden things could we but see them now, and though in his heart he must have known that she would never use them as a weapon against him, yet he was, when angry, inclined to say rash things. So the irritation deepened and the rumours expanded.

There was a curious but extraneous cause for royal alarm this year, and it lay in the many conflagrations of public buildings, which was put down to incendiarism, to the growth of republican ideals caught from France, and to a desire to degrade the Royal Family. Covent Garden Theatre was the first to be destroyed, September 20, 1808; in January 1809 the whole of the east wing and the apartments occupied by the King and Queen at St. James's Palace were burned down, the fire originating close to the Duke of Cambridge's rooms. The next month the New Sessions House, Westminster, was in flames; Drury Lane Theatre was burnt out in three hours; a fire occurred at Kensington Palace; and the gloom was deepened in the first week of March by a report that Hampton Court Palace had been burnt down, and a rumour—again false—that a train of gunpowder had been found at the King's Theatre. Though reasons were hazarded for one or two of the fires, a panic seized upon the public, and it was declared that after the burning of St. James's Palace a letter was received by the Prince of Wales, telling him that he would shortly hear of the destruction of other public buildings; and that after the fire at Drury Lane the Prince showed this letter to Sheridan.

Thus the Royal Family were in a terrible state of nerves, and the princes felt that it behoved them to walk warily, to reform their evil ways and to curry favour with their people, among whom were some who, not being too enlightened about the meaning of words, were loudly accusing Clarence of living in open adultery.

The burning of Drury Lane merits more than a mere mention here, as it marked a distinct epoch in

Dorothy's life. It had been her theatrical home for nearly a quarter of a century, and now in February 1809 she ended her career there with a flourish, turning a somewhat poor play into a great success, and so saying adieu to the scene of her greatest triumphs. For in the new Drury Lane which was opened in 1813 she only acted once.

It was widely declared that this theatre fire was caused by wilful incendiaryism, as the theatre had been closed that day, though others contended that plumbers had made an exceptionally big fire at which to melt lead, and had left the fire burning. It was not, however, until after eleven at night that the flames were seen, and in a few minutes they burst out in every direction. Little was saved beyond some theatrical books. Dorothy was one of the greatest losers, as she kept a large number of dresses and other stage property there; but the thing that she valued most—her bureau—was rescued by the bravery and exertion of a literary gentleman named Kent, "who smashed in the door of her dressing-room and secured it. What it contained, however, remains a secret."

The building of this theatre had cost £129,000, there were debts on it amounting to £300,000, and the insurance was only for the small sum of £35,000, so Sheridan's situation was really desperate, though it is reported that during the fire he went to the Piazza Coffee House, and upon a friend remarking his philosophic calm, he replied, "Surely a man may drink a glass of wine at his own fireside."

The actors were also in despair, but were somewhat relieved by a subscription and a benefit performance at the Opera House, to which Dorothy gave her services. Taylor, the lessee of the Opera House,

offered his theatre to the company free for three nights, and, by being their own door-keepers, the actors took £2,200. After which, until April, when they went to the Lyceum, the Drury Lane company acted several times a week at the Opera House; but Dorothy did not join them.

Rumour asserted that a serious and violent quarrel occurred between herself and the Prince on the night of the conflagration, and it is not unlikely, seeing that the marriage settlement of her daughter Dorothea must then have been under discussion. Whether there was a quarrel or not, Boaden declares that she withdrew from all permanent engagements from that time, "it not being the wish of her illustrious friend that she should continue in the profession of which she was so great an ornament." A statement which is partly borne out by one of the following letters, obviously written to Boaden, and touching upon the defamatory strictures upon her daughters as well as upon her quarrels with the Duke. The latter, with her usual large-heartedness and pride, she denies *in toto*, and yet there are so many hints of the trouble, so much evidence of it, that it is not possible to accept literally what she says. It must also be remembered that she considered Boaden as the representative of the Press, and that she wrote to him, in answer to an invitation from him, that which she wished the world to believe.

"DEAR SIR,

"I should be very ungrateful indeed if I could for a moment consider as an enemy one from whom I have received very decided proofs of kindness and attention. I love candour and truth on all occasions,

and the frankness with which you speak of my professional merits stamps a value on your opinion of them, and which (*entre nous*) I really believe is quite as much as they deserve; but we do not feel inclined to quarrel with the world for thinking better of us than we deserve.

“I do not know how to thank you for the humanity with which you seem to enter into my feelings; they are indeed very acute, and, did you know the three incomparable and truly amiable objects of my anxiety, you would not be inclined to withdraw your sympathy.

“With regard to the report of my quarrel with the Duke, every day of our past and present life must give the lie to it. He is an example for half the husbands and fathers in the world, the best of masters, and the most firm and generous of friends. I will in a day or two avail myself of your kind offer to contradict those odious and truly wicked reports. I am so ill that I can do nothing myself, but must wait for the assistance of a good and clever friend who is at present out of the way, and who, if the truth is not quite scared out of the world, will endeavour to do away the ill impressions those reports were meant to make. In the meantime accept my thanks, and believe me,

“Yours truly,
“DORA JORDAN.”

The second letter, on the same point and written to the same person, was dated from Bushy House on March 27, 1809, and runs—

“When I last did myself the pleasure of writing to you I mentioned that I waited for the assistance of a friend, who was not just then in the way, to contradict

the cruel and defamous reports that were then in circulation; but on my application to him (perhaps he was right), he said that what *had been done* had every good effect that could possibly be expected or wished for, and that a renewal of the subject might do more harm than good. Of this I should like to have *your opinion* when you have read the enclosed. I need not add that you will set the author down for a very partial friend indeed. In obedience to the Duke's wishes, I have withdrawn myself for the present—or at least till there is a theatre royal for me to appear in. Mr. March and Mr. Alsop, the two gentlemen to whom my daughters are married, will do themselves the pleasure of leaving their cards at your door next week.

“I ever am, Sir,

“Your obliged, humble servant,

“DORA JORDAN.”

“P.S.—I am to play to-morrow week at the Opera House; and, as it is likely to be my last night, it would not be amiss to have it ‘insinuated’ into the boxes.”

Boaden comments upon this last letter that the intended visits of Alsop and March were, “I know never made.”

Writing from memory long after the events, Boaden is at times curiously misleading, for he declares that Dorothy had been away from Drury Lane for two seasons, and “now returned only to suffer in its fall.” As a matter of fact she had been acting through those two seasons perhaps more persistently than at any other time of her life.

In one of the letters quoted Dorothy spoke of something having been done to stop the slanders, and the

method adopted by the clever friend is indicated in a paragraph from *The Morning Post* of March 7, 1809. "The infamous lies for some time past in circulation respecting Mrs. Jordan and her unoffending and innocent family are likely to have an end; for as Sheridan says in *The School for Scandal*, 'If the forger of the lie is not to be found, the injured parties should immediately fix on some of the endorsers.' This method will be pursued, and, it is supposed, will be the means of shutting up the mouths of some very infamous, base and malignant characters." And it really seems to have had some effect in putting an end to the noxious paragraphs.

That Dorothy withdrew from her profession is emphatically stated by Sir Jonah Barrington, who asserts that he *frequently* heard her solicited to retire (he does not say by whom, but leaves it for inference that it was the Duke), and adds that she was *urged* to forego all further emoluments from its pursuit, and "this single fact gives the contradiction direct to the reports which I should feel it improper even to allude to further." (That the Duke took the money she earned.)

Both Barrington and Boaden were tremendously affected by the honour which Royalty did them by knowing them, and Barrington's chief care was to whitewash the Duke as far as lay in his power. Boaden knew Dorothy far better by correspondence than by contact, and some of his information he took directly from Barrington, thus repeating the same mistakes.

As a matter of fact, at this time the Duke was far too dependent upon Dorothy's earnings for him to wish her to withdraw from the stage, and he was so keen upon her acting that he almost always arranged

her provincial tours for her with great care, and was particularly anxious to secure her the best terms possible.

That she did not at the time act with the Drury Lane company is to be explained by the fact that with them she could not possibly have received the salary which would have made it worth her while, and that a week in a country town was equal in value to a month in London.

Dorothy's facility in letter writing has already been mentioned, and it is an extraordinary thing, due to the method or want of method of the Duke of Clarence, that hundreds of her letters to him are still in existence. In June 1906 as many as 335 letters, written between 1808 and 1810, were sold at Sotheby's for £333, being described as "the property of a lady." These were written from London, Liverpool, Manchester, Wakefield, Bath, Cheltenham, York, Leicester, Dublin and other places, giving a minute description of her theatrical life and experiences. A casket of her letters was also recently offered for sale in London.

Many valuable letters by her are also in the private collection of Mr. A. M. Broadley. In 1899 six of her letters to her eldest son were sold in the Wright sale, fetching such sums as £14 15s. and £13 15s. each, and these were later sold at considerably advanced prices. The collection sold at Sotheby's had been found at Bushy Park by Queen Adelaide, who, with her usual kindness, handed them to Lord Frederick Fitzclarence. How they found their way to the sale-room is not known. In one of the envelopes an old Bank of England note for £2 was discovered, and I am assured by the owner of this batch of letters that

nearly every one of them contained money, while her weariness of acting and her desire to give up her profession were constantly expressed.

Here is first-hand evidence, not only that the Duke could not or would not let her have the rest which she so thoroughly deserved, but that he did the thing that most of her biographers emphatically—some scornfully—deny: he took every advantage of her labours. Thus, until she was fifty, instead of living a pleasant, luxurious life of splendid guilt, and receiving £1000 a year for her personal needs, she was burdened with the responsibility of adding what she could to the Duke's household expenses. There have been many controversies over this point, which these letters settle once for all.

That there was no intention in the mind of the Duke that Dorothy should leave the stage is proved by the fact that on Monday, April 10, 1809, Dorothy left London to go on a tour to Bristol and Bath—a tour which, no doubt, the Duke arranged for her with his usual care. She took one daughter—probably Lucy—with her, and soon found that the slanders had not only preceded her, but had formed so excellent an advertisement for her as to produce large receipts. From that town she wrote to Boaden a letter which gives an echo of her weariness of the stage, tells of her success of the moment and of the gossip which surrounded her. It is really a very interesting letter, and her statement that she started life at fourteen gives weight to the report that she began life in a milliner's shop. She also speaks of brothers and *sisters*, which shows that she had more than one sister, and alludes to the favours—probably of Press announcements—which Boaden has granted her.

"Bath, Sunday, April 22, 1809.

"DEAR SIR,

"I should be more insensible than my heart tells me I am if I did not experience much gratification from your very kind and friendly letters—friendly they must be, for I am ever asking favours of you, and feel it impossible that I can ever return them.

"My professional success through life has, indeed, been most extraordinary, and, consequently, attended with great emolument. But from my first starting in life, at the early age of fourteen, I have always had a large family to support. My mother was a duty. But on *brothers and sisters* I have lavished more money than can be supposed, and more, I am sorry to say, than I can well justify to those who have a stronger and prior claim to my exertions. With regard to myself (as much depends on our ideas of riches), I have certainly enough, but this is too selfish a consideration to weigh one moment against what I consider to be duty; I am quite tired of the profession. I have lost those great excitements, *vanity and emulation*. The first has been amply gratified, and the last I see no occasion for; but still, without these it is a mere money-getting drudgery.

"The enthusiasm of the good people here is really ridiculous, but it brings grist to the mill, and I shall, notwithstanding the great drawback of unsettled weather, clear, between this place and Bristol, from £800 to £900.

"Though I very seldom go out when from home, I was tempted by my dear girl to go to a fashionable library to read the papers, and, not being known, was entertained by some ladies with a most pathetic description of the parting between me and the Duke!

My very dress was described, and the whole conversation accurately repeated! Unfortunately for the *party*, a lady came in who immediately addressed me by name, which threw them into the most ridiculous and (I conceive) the most unpleasant embarrassment imaginable. In pity to them, I left the place *immediately*, and flattered myself that I did not show any disgust or ill-nature on the occasion.

“The last favour I asked of you was not to gratify my own vanity, but my *best friends'*; who, in spite of the world, are, as I can with truth assure you, as much interested about me as they were seventeen years ago.

“Believe me ever your truly obliged

“DORA JORDAN.”

“P.S.—I fear I have tired you with my scrawl.”

Her engagement at Bristol was for Monday, April 10, and her six or seven nights at Bath would extend over two or three weeks, as she now only acted two or three nights a week, and thus she did not get home again until the end of the month, the Bath verdict upon her being that she had never acted better in her life.

CHAPTER XVI

TOIL AND TROUBLE

“To comic Jordan’s laughing eye,
The tear of pity stole ;
But in revenge she drew a sigh,
From each spectator’s soul.”

ANON.

“It is by the ignorant that worth is most usually injured. It is by those who know her *not* that Mrs. Jordan is discredited. Those who *do* know her, never can know enough of her good qualities, her conciliatory temper, her engaging manners, her readiness to oblige, and her willingness to assist, the open generosity of her hand, the superior liberality of her mind.”—*Contemporary Criticism*.

IF Dorothy was agitated about her girls, she now began to know what it meant to have a boy in danger; for while she and her children were preparing for Christmas in 1808, her son George was tramping with Sir John Moore’s army to Corunna, and taking part in the battle of that name. Some time in February he was home again, and his coming brought joy to his parents, the Duke writing to his sister Amelia, who took an affectionate interest in his children, announcing his return: “I am happy to inform you that George arrived last night, in high health and spirits, after having established a perfect character with all ranks in our army. General Stewart, who certainly on one occasion saved his life, speaks of my son in such terms of commendation, that unless writing to you I would not mention the circumstances. Indeed, in the event of the General going again he told me he would rather have George than any other for his aide-de-camp.”

In April, George did go again to the Peninsula, and in July was fighting in the Battle of Talavera, when a

splinter of a shell grazed his thigh and knee, but did no severe damage. It was concerning him and his exploits that Dorothy wrote to Boaden while she was in Ireland, incidentally indicating the domesticity of her home, while hinting at Boaden's press services. For in June 1809, Dorothy—with her daughter Lucy—and Kemble went to Dublin, where they proved equally popular. What terms Kemble made is not known, probably £100 a night, for he was said to leave the Irish capital with £1500 in his pocket. Dorothy's arrangement was for half the receipts, one which left plenty of opportunity for evasion—an opportunity which seems to have been liberally taken, as though the house was crowded when she played, the takings were always reported as small.

Dublin, Sunday, June 18th, 1809.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I had left Bushy for this place before the arrival of your letter. That you would enter into my feelings respecting my dear boy, I was convinced, when I sent you the ‘extract’; and as you rightly supposed, only meant it for your own perusal; for, however gratifying it might be to my feeling, to see any testimonial of his good conduct before the world, I have reason to believe that he would be very angry with me if he thought I had made it *public*. I only mention this to show you that he is an unassuming, modest boy; so much so, that we never get him to speak of the business at *Corunna*, where he was himself *concerned*; but the accounts of him from every other quarter, were, indeed, most gratifying.

“ With regard to myself, I have not much to say; the audience are, of course, very kind, and my reception was most brilliant. But *entre nous*, I do not think I

shall make as much money as I expected. With every good wish, I remain, Dear sir, Your most obliged, Humble Servant,

“DORA JORDAN.”

The visit promised well, and might have gone well but that Jones the manager, and Crampton, probably the stage manager, appeared to imagine that such a person as Dorothy could carry the whole comedy on her own shoulders, and needed no particular support from other actors. The company was a poor one, as Barrington says, “many of the performers were below mediocrity. One was forgetful—another drunk. I confess I never myself saw such a crew.” Boaden went further, saying that they were unable to give cues, and knew nothing of stage business. Jones himself is accused of disrespect to Dorothy, he being probably actuated by a belief in the scandals which had made her so miserable earlier in the year.

Peggy was her introduction on Wednesday, June 14, and the next night she played Lady Teazle to the Charles Surface of an actor named Dwyer, from Edinburgh. The Saturday was regarded as an especial performance, being under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, and then she played Beatrice to Dwyer’s Benedick. Twice she was Bizarre in *The Inconstant*, a play new to Dwyer, and in which, on both occasions, he disgraced himself, for he not only had not troubled to learn his part, but on June 27 he was certainly drunk, and probably on other evenings too. That night he broke down hopelessly, and Dorothy did her best to prompt him, until at last she lost patience. Upon this, Dwyer appealed to the audience, declaring that he played the part at short

notice to please Mrs. Jordan; and then "an uncommon clamour instantly ensued, and the remainder of the play was completely destroyed," says the *Freeman's Journal*.

Dorothy naturally refused to act again with Dwyer, and finished her term there without realizing that anything else would occur. Dwyer, however, had lost the chance of any further engagement in Dublin, and his reputation had suffered, which he could not pass over.

Socially, Dorothy seems to have been a success, having invitations poured upon her; Barrington does not fail to mention that he himself met her at various houses, and had her at his own. He says, though, that people who expected to hear wit dropping from her lips every time she spoke were disappointed, as in society she was quiet, "almost reserved," and "the performer was wholly merged in the gentlewoman."

As far as can be traced this was Barrington's introduction to Mrs. Jordan, and he ran the friendship vigorously. But in his sketches he would have the world believe that he had known her long and intimately. He talks of "her last visit to the Irish capital," "when last in Dublin," "I once accompanied Mrs. Jordan to the Green Room at Liverpool," "I have seen her *on a cruise*, that is, at a provincial theatre, having gone over once from Dublin for that purpose;" etc. "I have seen this accomplished woman in the midst of one of the finest families in England, surrounded by splendour, beloved, respected, and treated with all the deference paid to a member of high society. I have had the gratification of knowing intimately that amiable woman and justly celebrated performer. Her public talents are recorded, her private merits are

known to few. I enjoyed a portion of her confidence on several very particular subjects, and had full opportunity of appreciating her character.” And in another paragraph he asserts: “I chanced to acquire the honour of a very favourable introduction to His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, who became the efficient friend of me and my family—not with that high and frigid mien which so often renders ungracious the favours of authorities in the British Government, but with the frankness and sincerity of a prince. He received and educated my only son as his own, and sent him, as Lieutenant of the 5th Dragoon Guards, to make his campaign in the Peninsula.”

As a matter of fact, Barrington saw Dorothy Bland as a girl, on her first introduction to the Irish stage, and his next meeting with her was on her last, it is true, but only other visit there. Then he paid strong court to her, became her champion, and by her means gained an introduction to the Duke. With Dorothy he achieved a definite end, for she appears to have invited young Edward Barrington to go back with her to Bushy Park on a visit, which ended in his being sent by the Duke to the Military College at Marlow, where George Fitzclarence had been educated. Barrington also struck up a friendship with Lucy Ford, as is shown by various remarks in letters.

Dorothy had arranged to take her leave of Dublin on Monday, July 3, but probably stayed a few days longer, as she did not arrive at Bushy until a week later. There she found a great disappointment awaiting her, which caused the announcement of her arrival to Barrington to be of a somewhat agitated kind.

“My dear Sir, I have returned here. But, alas! the happiness I had promised myself has met a cruel

check at finding the good Duke very unwell. You can scarcely conceive my misery at the cause of such a disappointment; but there is every appearance of a favourable result not being very distant; 'tis his old periodical attack [asthma followed by gout], but not near so severe as I have seen it . . . I shall have neither head nor nerves to write, or even to think, till I am able to contribute to your pleasure, by announcing my own happiness and his recovery."

The Duke was sufficiently recovered to go down to Brighton to help to celebrate his eldest brother's birthday at the beginning of August, and Dorothy was alone when the news of Talavera filtered through. Concerning this she wrote to some sympathetic friend, perhaps Boaden, as he possessed the letter—

“Bushy, Thursday, August 17th, 1809.

“I am very vain, but still I have judgment enough not to be fond of doing that which I know I do very ill. Still, I feel pleasure in writing to you who so kindly enter into all my feelings. You may easily guess what they were last Monday night, when I heard the account of the Battle of Talavera. Five thousand killed! the Duke at Brighton! I went to bed, but not to sleep.

“The Duke set out at five o'clock on the Tuesday, to be the first to relieve me from my misery. I am mentally relieved; but it has torn my nerves to pieces. I have *five* boys, and must look forward to a life of constant anxiety and suspense. I am at present very ill—Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me, Your ever obliged,

“DORA JORDAN.”

She had not been long at home when news reached

her of an action for libel Dwyer intended to take against a man named Corri—sometimes given as Conolly—who was associated with *The Dublin Satirist*, and the whole matter took on the aspect of a new scandal, in which the minor press delighted. One cause being that, among the old acquaintances whom Dorothy found in Dublin was an actor named Barratt, who had been in the theatre when she, as Dolly Francis, uttered her first laugh on the stage. When he, old and poor, made himself known to her she gave him assistance with her accustomed generosity. The counsel for Dwyer, a man named Gould, twisted this natural incident into something unclean and bad, blackening her character as much as possible; for Barrington, who joined in the fray, found that part of Gould's cross-examining consisted of asking questions “highly improper to that lady, but he (Gould) took care not to go too far with me when I was *present*—a mono-syllable or two I found quite sufficient to check the exuberance of ‘my learned friend.’”

Barrington kept Dorothy posted up in the matter, as is seen by her letter to him; and some allusions were made in the English press.

“Bushy House, Wednesday.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Not having the least suspicion of the business in Dublin, it shocked and grieved me very much; not only on my own account; but I regret that I should have been the involuntary cause of anything painful to you, or to your amiable family. But of Mr. Jones I can think anything; and I beg you will do me the justice to believe that my feelings are not selfish. Why, indeed, should I expect to escape their infamous calumnies? Truth, however, will force its way, and

justice exterminate that nest of vipers. I wanted nothing from Mr. Crampton's generosity; but I had a claim on his *justice*, his *honour*.

"During the two representations of the *Inconstant*, I represented to him the state Mr. Dwyer was in, and implored him, out of respect to the audience, if not in pity to my terrors, to change the play. As to the libel on Mr. Dwyer, charged to me by Mr. Gould, I never, directly or indirectly, by words or by writing, demeaned myself by interfering, in the most remote degree, with so wretched a concern. I knew no editor, I read no newspapers, while in Dublin. The charge is false and libellous on me, published, I presume, through Mr. Gould's assistance. Under that view of the case he will feel himself rather unpleasantly circumstanced, should I call upon him either to *prove* or *disavow* his assertions. To be introduced in any way into such a business shocks and grieves me; he might have pleaded for his companions without calumniating me; but, for the present, I shall drop an irksome subject, which has already given me more than ordinary uneasiness.

"Yours, etc.,

"DORA JORDAN."

The Monthly Mirror, commenting on the incident, added: "Some of the papers state that there was a *fracas* between Mrs. Jordan and another performer at the Dublin theatre. There was no *fracas*; but the fact is Mr. Dwyer behaved improperly on the stage, and the manager very properly withdrew him during the remainder of Mrs. Jordan's performances there. If Mr. Dwyer will send on a relation of the story *as he tells it*, it shall be inserted." An invitation which Mr. Dwyer did not accept.

Judgment was not given in this case until February 1810, the verdict being that Dwyer was to receive £200 damages from Corri for the publication of strictures upon his conduct in appealing to the audience against a rebuke given him by Mrs. Jordan for his acting, in consequence of which he had lost the benefit of his employment by the managers of the Dublin and Galway theatres. With this £200 Dwyer went to America, "where he was much admired."

Beginning September 18, 1809, Dorothy, taking Frances Alsop with her, made a north-westerly tour, acting at Liverpool, Chester and Leicester, and clearing about £1200, a proof, said *The Sun*, "that theatrical judgment is not confined to the metropolis." It was seven years since she had last been to Liverpool, and she had changed much in that time, for life had dealt hardly with her of late, she had had much to endure, and she knew that—however brave and cheerful the accounts of her domestic happiness given to her friends—that happiness, if not entirely doomed, was slowly eluding her; she knew that Clarence could never really stand out against the Royal wishes, and against his own monetary difficulties. So at Liverpool it was remarked that that laugh which had been so essential to her well-being was rarely heard in private. Barrington, who went over from Dublin to see her act for a few nights, says that Mrs. Alsop and "her old maid who assiduously attended her," would go to the Green Room with her, she being languid and depressed. Yet it seemed that the moment her feet touched the boards, her spirits rose, her voice rang clear, and her ready laugh dispelled every symptom of depression.

Her "cruise" over, Dorothy wrote to Barrington in November—

"My dear Sir, I returned here on the 7th inst., after a very fatiguing, though very prosperous cruise of five weeks, and found all as well as I could wish. Your Edward left us this morning ; I found him improved in everything. I never saw the Duke enjoy anything more than the poultry you sent us ; they were delicious. He desires me to offer his best regards to yourself and your ladies. Lucy is gone on a visit to Lady de Roos."

A little later she wrote : "I cannot resist the pleasure of informing you that your dear boy has not only passed, but passed with great credit, at the Military College. It gives us all the highest satisfaction. My two beloved boys are now at home ; they have both gone to South Hill to see your Edward. We shall have a full and merry house at Christmas ; 'tis what the dear Duke delights in. A happier set, when altogether, I believe never existed. The ill-natured parts of the world never can enjoy the tranquil pleasures of domestic happiness. I have made two most lucrative trips since I saw you. Atkinson came to see me at Liverpool : quite as poetical as ever."

In a further letter, early in 1810, announcing a return from Maidenhead, where the Duke had a small house, she describes how well Edward looks in his uniform, and adds—

"I am sure you will be pleased to hear that your young friend Lucy is about to be married, much to my satisfaction, to Colonel Hawker of the 14th Dragoons : he is a most excellent man, and has a very good private property : she will make the best of wives—a better girl never lived : it makes me quite happy, and I intend to give her the value of £10,000."

The various allusions in these letters to Liverpool, to her boys being at home, and to Lucy's engagement,

date them all as being written within eight months of the Dublin visit, in spite of the wily Barrington's insinuating way of trying to make us believe that he was a long-tried friend of the family. That gentleman had done what he had angled for, he had got a free education with further prospects for his son, and he paid for it by writing a most fulsome panegyric upon the Duke of Clarence in his *Recollections*; asserting that to the last hour of his life the Duke's solicitude for Dorothy was undiminished. If this was truly so, most folks would agree that his Royal solicitude was a most undesirable thing. "He was incapable of unkindness to Mrs. Jordan . . . he begged her to leave the stage, but, infatuated with attachment to theatrical pursuits," she continued to act; "she remained, to the very moment of her death, in full possession of all the means of comfort—nay, if she chose it, of *luxury and splendour*." And he finishes his absurd and untrue tirade by saying grandiloquently of her miserable stay in France, "as she (Dorothy) wished, during her residence in France, to be totally retired, she took no suite."

Of the visit to Chester, Ryley, an old actor who, as *The Itinerant*, wrote nine volumes of reminiscences, gives an anecdote which, if long and oft-quoted, is interesting for its further proof of Dorothy's kindness of heart. The old man prefaced his story by the following—

"Those who, like me, have had the pleasure of being on terms of friendly intimacy with that unrivalled actress, equally a credit to her profession and an honour to human nature, will corroborate my testimony in asserting that, in addition to her many other qualities she possessed a heart sensible of the most

tender and humane emotions, called into instant action by the least approach of misery or distress."

Then comes this relation: "During her short stay at Chester, where she had been performing, her washerwoman, a widow with three small children, was, by a merciless creditor, thrown into prison; a small debt of about forty shillings was increased, by law expenses, to eight pounds. As soon as Mrs. Jordan heard of the circumstance, she sent for the attorney, paid him the demand, and observed, with as much severity as her good-natured countenance could assume, 'You lawyers are certainly infernal spirits, allowed on earth to make poor mortals miserable.' The attorney, however, pocketed the affront, and with a low bow made his exit.

"On the afternoon of the same day the poor woman was liberated; as Mrs. Jordan was taking her usual walk with her servant, the widow, with her children, followed her, and just as she had taken shelter from a shower of rain in a kind of porch, dropped on her knees and with grateful emotion, exclaimed, 'God for ever bless you, Madam! You have saved me and my children from ruin.' The children, beholding their mother's tears, added, by their cries to the affecting scene, which a sensitive mind could not behold but with strong feelings of sympathy. The natural liveliness of Mrs. Jordan's disposition was not easily damped by sorrowful scenes; however, although she strove to hide it, the tear of feeling stole down her cheek, and stooping to kiss the children, she slipped a pound note into the mother's hand, and in her usual playful manner, replied, 'There, there; now it's all over; go, good woman, God bless you! don't say another word.' The grateful creature would have

replied but her benefactress insisted on her silence and departed.

“ It happened that another person had taken shelter under the porch, and witnessed the whole of this interesting scene, who, as soon as Mrs. Jordan observed him, came forward, and he, holding out his hand, exclaimed with a deep sigh, ‘ Lady, pardon the freedom of a stranger; but would to the Lord the world were all like thee ! ’ The figure of this man bespoke his calling; his countenance was pale; and a suit of sable, rather the worse for wear, covered his tall and spare person. The penetrating eye of Thalia’s favourite votary soon developed his character and profession, and, with her wonted good humour, retreating a few paces she replied, ‘ No, I won’t shake hands with you.’ ‘ Why?’ ‘ Because you are a Methodist preacher, and when you know who I am, you’ll send me to the devil ! ’

“ ‘ The Lord forbid ! I am, as you say, a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who tells us to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and relieve the distressed; and do you think I can behold a sister fulfil the commands of my Great Master, without feeling that spiritual attachment which leads me to break through worldly customs, and offer you the hand of friendship and brotherly love ? ’

“ ‘ Well, well, you are a good old soul, I dare say—but—I—I—don’t like fanatics; and you’ll not like me when I tell you who I am.’ ‘ I hope I shall.’ ‘ Well, then; I tell you I am a player.’ The preacher sighed. ‘ Yes, I am a player; and you must have heard of me; Mrs. Jordan is my name.’ After a short pause—he again extended his hand, and with a complaisant countenance replied, ‘ The Lord bless thee, whoever

thou art; His goodness is unlimited. He has bestowed on you a large portion of His spirit; and as to thy calling, if thy soul upbraid thee not, the Lord forbid that I should.'

"Thus reconciled, and the rain having abated, they left the porch together; the offer of his arm was accepted; and the female Roscius of Comedy, and the disciple of John Wesley proceeded arm in arm to the door of Mrs. Jordan's dwelling. At parting, the preacher shook hands with her, saying, 'Fare thee well, Sister; I know not what the principles of people of thy calling may be; thou art the first I ever conversed with; but if their benevolent practices equal thine, I hope and trust, at the great day, the Almighty God will say to each, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."'"

Colonel Hawker of the 14th Dragoons was a person of considerable interest to Dorothy early in the year 1810, for he was going to marry her daughter Lucy. He was not a young man, being about fifty at the time, a widower whose first wife had died the preceding May, and the father of a grown-up daughter, who was to be married during the following year. He was aide-de-camp to the King, and had been raised to the rank of Colonel in November 1809. He was also a friend of the Prince of Wales and of Clarence, and so had opportunities of meeting Lucy frequently. It must be noted that the girl had many friends in aristocratic circles, and among her mother's relatives, and was not in the least leading the secluded vicariously penitent life of a child of shame, as good Victorians later would have thought the correct thing. Hawker's daughter was a visitor in the Clarence household, and helped to make Lucy's path smooth.

To give this daughter a standing independent of herself, Dorothy took for her a house named the Priory at Sydenham, and it was probably thence the week before the wedding that the following letter was addressed to the Duke—

“There was a mistake in the order for the carriage which is the reason of its coming down so late. I saw Hawker last night, who is better, and will dine with you if you have no objection. The two beautiful Birds are come, and I shall be at a loss how to keep them, as their present cage is too small; however, I must keep them here till Saturday, when I wish you would make it convenient to send the carman for the large cage, which is just the thing for them. Henry is very well and very happy.

“Miss Hawker will return to-morrow with Sophy; love to all, I shall be very glad when this week is over.

“God Bless you all,

“D. J.

“I don’t know whether you enclosed me this letter from George or not.”

So on April 30, 1810, Samuel Hawker was married to Lucy Ford in the presence of Dorothea Jordan, Sophia Fitzclarence, Andrew Nixon, and Henry Edward Fitzclarence.

It is curious, after the stories of mystery about Dorothy’s birth, parentage, and death, to find that there were no mysteries, only commonplace facts, covered with the dust of time, which no one seems to have taken the trouble to disturb. She had a circle of relatives with whom she mixed when she had opportunity, and kept in touch with her mother’s relatives in Wales. Thus, some time after her

marriage Lucy Hawker went down to Trelethyn for a long visit, and had a daughter baptized there.¹

Of the three sons-in-law Dorothy best liked Edward March, in some way he appealed to her, and she accompanied her liking with both trust and respect, only to find herself treated later with horrible ingratitude, and almost incredible cruelty.

In the month of her daughter's marriage a bogus epitaph upon Dorothy was published in *The Monthly Mirror*. The epitaph in itself was but a pun, the comment upon it, however, was so painfully, though unintentionally, prophetic that it gives a shock to the reader aware of after events—

"When *in a* MERRY strain
What rare delight she gave!
But now she gives us pain,
Because she's *in a* GRAVE."

The writer followed this with a grumble that people would not die, and so give him the chance of exercising his art of epitaph-making, and added, "Mrs. Jordan goes to Ireland with only, as Brutus says, a plank between her and eternity; but—nothing happens. Others have been drowned going thither; some women kissed to death, and many murdered there in more expeditious and certain ways, but no, nothing happens to her. Something might have been expected from children, but as they grow up none of them vex her to death—not one—if but one had done it I should have been contented."

The writer had not many years to wait for satisfaction, for Mrs. Alsop did her best to grant his wish, and Edward March contrived to get it fulfilled.

In January 1810 Dorothy was delighting Manchester,

¹ Family Letters.



DOROTHY JORDAN AS THE COMIC MUSE, SUPPORTED BY EUPHROSYNE

FROM A MEZZOTINT BY THOMAS PARK, AFTER A
PAINTING BY JOHN HOPPNER, R.A., IN THE AQUITANIA COLLECTION
OF THE CUNARD COMPANY

TO VIMU
AUGUST 1940

closing there on Saturday the 20th and playing at Leeds in February. There she received a curious letter of remonstrance signed by several professed Methodists, which testified to the power of her acting.

She was solemnly accused of holding communication with the Wicked One, who had lent her charms, spells, and magic, since, as they alleged, they had been *tempted against their will* to go to the Devil's House six times, though they had never seen a play before, and hated all such abominations; that she had thus spirited the money out of their pockets and induced them to neglect their families and employments. The letter concluded with a serious admonition to her as she appeared to have *a soul worth saving*, to give up her profession and intimacy with the Wicked One.

As to the charge of magic spells, etc., she might fairly in answer have referred to her natural talents and genuine humour, and have said with Othello, "this is the only witchcraft I have used."

March and April were partly absorbed by preparation for the wedding, and though she was acting practically all the rest of the year the information available about her movements is but scrappy. In the beginning of June she was in Edinburgh, and finishing there on the 20th, she went on to Glasgow, where her affectionate heart received a terrible shock.

The Duke of Clarence's summer illness came on as usual, but this year he was very bad indeed; so bad, that he thought death was at hand, and sent an express messenger to the north to summon Dorothy. The managers of the theatre most nobly "relinquished all the advantages which might be expected from the exertions of her talents, and Mrs. Jordan immediately set off for Bushy." She drove night and day, leaving

her carriage neither to eat nor to sleep, and her state of mind may be imagined. But on arrival at Bushy she found the Duke slightly better, though attended constantly by Doctors Dundas and Blane.

To this time belongs a letter from Dorothy, which Boaden carelessly places a year and a half later after the separation had been effected. Not only the fact of the Duke's illness, but the allusions to the "very great shock," and to "two Drury Lanes" proves this, to say nothing of the circumstantial evidence that they would scarcely have been inhabiting the same house on such amicable terms after Dorothy had received her marching orders.

"Dear Sir, Allow me to thank you for your kind attention to my request. We really live so much in the country, and so entirely within ourselves, that we might be dead and buried, without our friends knowing even that we had been ill.

"I have the heartfelt happiness of informing you that the Duke is considerably better, though far from being as we could wish. However, his physicians have given His Royal Highness permission to go to town to-morrow. I have been confined ever since my return, owing to the fatigue and anxiety I have gone through. I fear it will be some time before I recover the very *great shock* I received. I hear there are to be two Drury Lanes, I believe just as likely as one. Yours ever,

"DORA JORDAN."

To this illness, which must temporarily have caused Clarence to see things with clearer vision, is to be attributed the announcement that this coming season of 1810-1811 was to be the very last in which Mrs. Jordan

would be seen on the stage, an announcement which was made in the papers of July. That decision arrived at, the Duke, as soon as he was well enough, set to work to map out her winter travels and make the very best terms possible for her. Dorothy was probably very happy for a month or two that summer, forgetting the old proverb which tells how when the devil was sick the devil a monk would be, but that the devil when well the devil a monk was he. The very thing which had brought her and the man she loved closer together, was also the first step towards their parting; for the Queen, that masterful and often hard-hearted mother, had been upset by her son's illness. For years he had been practically in disgrace, and rarely included in any Court festivities; now, however, the Queen began to invite him to Windsor and to Buckingham House, and actually, in August, went to the length of celebrating his birthday as a family festival at Frogmore House, where she resided when at Windsor. She had probably at last come to the somewhat obvious conclusion that the worst way of convicting him of folly was by closing the doors upon him, and the best way of weaning him from his companion of eighteen years was to separate them by bringing him back into the Royal circle. His sister Amelia, too, was desperately ill all through this autumn, and so from one cause and another Clarence was thenceforward constantly at Windsor, sharing in all fêtes and brought directly under the influence of the Queen.

The enigmatic observation in Dorothy's letter of two Drury Lanes refers to a managerial idea that the public had so increased that there was room for two new theatres under the one management. There had been whispers about this during the past autumn, but

it was just being discussed openly when the letter was written.

In August 1810, Dorothy was faced with the fact that managers were beginning to think they ought to get her services on terms more advantageous to themselves, and she had a discussion with the Richmond people which drew an ultimatum from her—

“I must either decline performing at Richmond or do so on the old terms, twenty guineas per night for six nights, paying you twenty for the seventh; twice a week; the time from the 10th or 12th of August. You arranging the plays and prices yourself and directing the business, or I *must decline* it altogether.”

Whether the Richmond manager climbed down I do not know, but shortly after she was endeavouring to arrange that her farewell should be given from the stage of Covent Garden early in 1811, at the large salary of £100 a night. However, the management thought the terms excessive and in spite of the following letter the matter hung fire for a time.

“Bushy, Friday.

“Mrs. Jordan presents her compliments to Mr. Henry Harris. A long engagement in London being an object of *moment* to her, on reflection, Mrs. Jordan thinks that a few nights (which she first mentioned to Mr. Harris) would *not* answer *her* purpose or *that* of her employers. Mr. Wroughton, an old friend of hers, has at her request kindly undertaken to present this, and being in possession of her ideas and expectations on this *occasion* has full power to negotiate for her. Mrs. Jordan is quitting Bushy on Monday, remaining absent near two months.”

Thomas Harris, the proprietor and manager of Covent Garden, being away ill at Brighton explains

the fact of the letter being addressed to a junior member of the family. The two months' absence to which the letter refers was occupied in touring, and as far as Dorothy believed in saying farewell to the towns which she had known in the height of her powers. She started at Cheltenham in September, and though it is not possible to give a list of the places she visited, I find her at Liverpool, "acting with as much spirit as ever she did," in October, and at Hull, where she was judged as too matronly both in figure and manner, but "in characters of a ripened age," such as Widow Cheerly, Lady Bell, Widow Belmour, and Mrs. Sullen (a part which she had once before played and then vowed she would never play again) "she exacted universal admiration." In December she was at Manchester.

It is pathetic to think that this dear, hard-worked woman—driven by necessity—was tramping the weary round of the principal theatres for two or three months at a time when she was longing for rest and the natural reward of her many years of exertion, and it is horrible to realize that a man whose absolutely assured income—to say nothing of other emoluments—was £18,000 a year was urging her on to work, arranging her tours, and receiving money from her in almost every letter she wrote him. That this was so, can be absolutely proved by the letters of Dorothy's to the Duke penned at this period.

She would have worked herself to death for him, and was giving him everything that she could, for she knew that the idea of separation was only scotched, not dead, and as the Duke's debts accumulated she saw the end of all happiness approaching unless she could do something to hold it.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SEPARATION

“O unfortunate woman ! A combination against my honour ! which most concerns me now, because *you* share in my disgrace, sir.”—From *The Country Wife*, by WYCHERLEY.

“Therefore, my noble lord, have a little patience, we'll go and look over our deeds and settlements immediately.”—From *A Trip to Scarborough*.

“If you should get a wife, I trust,
You'll prove to her a little just;
Prove to her love more true and fond,
Than when you stole poor Jordan's bond.”
PETER PINDAR, Jun.

THE list of engagements with which the last chapter ended effectually disproves the statement, based upon the careless assertions of the early biographers, that Dorothy lived a purely domestic and happy connubial life through 1810, and that for some peculiar and hidden reason she returned to the stage for a solitary engagement in Bath in February 1811. Also the new light thrown by her letters upon the Duke's attitude and action concerning these engagements disprove the common statement that Dorothy had such a hankering after the boards that she simply could not keep off them, though the Duke was always begging her to retire.

As was 1810 so was 1811; indeed, in one essential it was worse, for while Dorothy was laughing on the stage for money, Clarence was courting a girl of twenty-two for money. The apologists for the Duke declare that in asserting these things writers were eager to present him in an unfavourable light, and stated what they could not prove, and that no letters existed to clear up vexed points.

Well ! many letters exist to prove many things, and there is the evidence, sometimes unconsciously given, in newspapers, and the circumstantial evidence gathered from a careful comparison of events, all of which tend to show that the princely Duke is smirched and dishonoured by his treatment of Dorothy during the last years of her life. The mantle of Queen Charlotte, the enemy of her own sex, had fallen upon him ; he not only used his wife, for she was that by every natural law, to his own advantage, but threw her aside with a callous cynicism that was foreign to his character. He did the actual deed with tears, he so reasoned with her as to make her believe that it was vitally necessary, and afterwards she followed his dishonourable career with a pitying love, resolutely refusing ever to speak against him.

“Had he left me to *starve* I never would have uttered a word to his disadvantage ! ” was her passionate exclamation.

In later years, when Adelaide had rescued him from the mud, the character given him was that of a kind, affectionate, passionate and often stupid man ; one who in anger would swear at a clergyman or hold a relative up to public ridicule ; yet, on the other hand, soft-hearted and anxious not to inflict pain. But his treatment of Dorothy this year shows an absence of feeling, which reflects the character of the Queen. The public records of his movements at this time prove that he was constantly in touch with his mother, that all through his negotiations with Miss Tylney Long, the heiress, he was dining at Windsor and leaving there for Bushy the same night. He was there constantly while arranging his separation with Dorothy, and was in consultation with the Queen a night or two

before he followed Miss Long to Ramsgate. Thus it is scarcely possible, knowing how much Charlotte disliked his connection with Dorothy by this time, and how acquisitive she was, not to suspect that the Queen's influence was strong upon him, and that she was fully conversant with his intentions towards the heiress.

However, to follow events as they happened. In January 1811 Dorothy again went to Bristol, and on the 22nd she began a ten nights' engagement at Bath, acting every second night in her usual characters. Though her movements in the provinces were not much chronicled, she afterwards acted at various places; it is a mistake to assume that she only performed when Boaden mentions it, for it was usually only when something notable happened at this or that town that her presence there was recorded, such as the tragic incident of Cheltenham this year.

In June she came forward for the first time in the new Covent Garden at a benefit, "and she never gave the character of Peggy with more vivacity, nor was ever received with warmer applause." Her reception was, in fact, so wildly enthusiastic that the manager of the theatre suddenly awoke to the fact that she was worth her own price, and offered her an engagement for July at £100 a night. So on July 2 she began a series of ten performances, acting three times a week, and being welcomed by many congratulatory and affectionate comments in the papers. On the 11th of the month, when *The Way to Keep Him* was the play, and "the elegant, the accomplished Widow Belmour was personated by Mrs. Jordan," there was a chorus of praise over the manner in which she delivered her rules for the keeping of a husband; the following passage receiving three rounds of applause—

“To win a heart is easy—to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words, ‘for better for worse,’ women relax into indolence, and, while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think everything safe. But they are mistaken and a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the little folly that charms.”

How men have always loved think that they loved “the little folly that charms,” and how many a woman in the past has received black eyes and a beating for trying to display it. As a matter of fact, a real man hates folly, hates a woman to affect it and hates still more that a woman should really possess it; the only thing that he does like about it is the hidden sentiment behind the words, the idea that a woman will condescend even to folly that she may prove him the superior, and even this is the characteristic of a weak man only.

Poor Dorothy might well utter this passage with “inimitable effect,” for her attempts “to keep him” by loyalty and hard work had not been successful, and she may have wondered whether a “little folly” would not have been more efficacious. She was struggling with all her strength against impossible odds, for the money she could dribble into the ducal purse was gone before it was received. Barrington pompously and solemnly vows that she earned £7000 the last year of her acting. Even if she had in 1811 earned anything like that, it would have been of no use to a man who had a determined eye on a much larger income.

From Covent Garden Dorothy went in August to Leeds and to York; back to York! the town where Gentleman Smith had so often watched her and where she and Tate Wilkinson, now dead, had so often quarrelled. After that she may have taken Richmond,

but Margate was not visited that summer. The farewell winter season had stretched through the spring and summer to August and September, and she was still acting *without a break*, though from time to time the public were reminded that her last visits were being made.

The relations between the Duke and Dorothy were very strained this summer, and it is probable that they were not often at Bushy House at the same time, and when they were they quarrelled.

The Great Illegitimates affirms that by this time "unpleasant bickering frequently occurred; that the children of our actress were estranged from her, and as *pecuniary resources failed*, a palpable coldness and total neglect became apparent in a certain quarter. We do not pretend to deny that a want of money might be experienced by one individual, but we are by no means enabled to account for such a deficiency in another quarter . . . that she did begin to feel pecuniary embarrassment is a notorious fact, the solution of which some persons perhaps may shrewdly surmise, notwithstanding all varnish used to gloss over and mystify the fact."

The report of one fateful quarrel was preserved by Frances Alsop, who was in the room at the time, Dorothy being at work on a little wool rug designed for wrapping round a tea-urn. Clarence had by then made up his mind concerning his future, but the way in which he conveyed his plans to Dorothy seem to have been more the result of irritation than of a determined plan. I quote the passage from *The Great Illegitimates*—

"Some altercation taking place, and words growing high, the unfortunate lady, in the irritation of the

moment arising from wounded pride and indignant feelings, threw the rug at the head of her friend, which piece of workmanship we have recently had in our hands. We give this as one of the statements frequently reiterated by Mrs. Alsop, which becomes the more valuable as tending to confirm the statement we have previously made respecting the real cause of Mrs. Jordan's separation from her protector [the courting of Miss Long]." Mrs. Alsop would scarcely have invented this story, and I have proved several times the truth of incidents given in this book from corroborative evidence in contemporary biographies.

Dorothy, seeing what was before her, yet hoping to avert her fate, placed every obstacle in the Duke's way, and declared her determination not to be cast out into beggary. She had her bond, drawn up in 1791, and that should be kept to the letter. She herself must have failed to see how Clarence could possibly carry out its provisions, and perhaps hoped thus to stave off the final separation. Her future was impossible to contemplate; her best days were past, each year lessened her chance of making an income, her promises to her three daughters had not been redeemed, and she was often ill and incapable of acting. Thus she could only anticipate an old age of want.

Concerning the bond there is a story told that the Duke contrived by some means to get it from her and keep it. It is alluded to by many writers, and one hints at it in the following—

"In regard to the thousand pound settlement, such things have been heard of as procuring the loan of a bond under specious pretences, and never returning the same. Transactions of this nature will sometimes

occur in families, as a lady of the name of Robinson could testify was she still in existence."¹

Boaden does not mention it, but he admits that "it is not unlikely that she might have placed some part of her fortune at the temporary disposition of her noble friend," which for such a royalist was a serious admission. The evidence, however, points to the conclusion that, whatever the Duke tried in this way, Dorothy retained possession of the document.

It was money, money, money which caused the separation, she said, and some people who want money will sell their souls for it. The Duke would have been horrified at such a suggestion, and yet he was prepared to go a long distance in a transaction of the sort. For by this time it was an open secret that he was paying court, not so much to a young commoner, as to her fortune.

Two years earlier, when Dorothy's heart was breaking over the vile calumnies which were being spread abroad concerning her, that is in April 1809, a certain lady arrived in London with her household, announcing that arrival to her friends by sending out invitations to a sumptuous party in Grosvenor Square. This was Lady Catherine Tylney Long, widow of Sir James Tylney Long, who had brought her two daughters up to town for the season. The ball was opened by her eldest daughter Catherine dancing with the Marquis of Tweeddale, and though there were many notabilities present the Duke of Clarence was not among them. In October 1810 Catherine came of age, being one of the richest girls in England, the daily papers crediting her with landed property which brought her a rental of

¹ Perdita, whom the Regent kept by means of a bond, the conditions of which he never fulfilled.

£73,000, and an accumulation of £350,000 in money, making her yearly income as much as £93,000. As a matter of fact she had £40,000 a year, and she necessarily had also such a train of applicants for this fortune—with herself thrown in—that she hardly knew some of the individuals which composed it. Yet for nearly three years after her first introduction into London she remained single. As her name spread the attention of the Royal Dukes was attracted, and Clarence decided that in her lay his salvation. In this belief he was encouraged by his brother the Prince of Wales, who, on his becoming Regent, was said to be ready to use all his influence to get the Marriage Act repealed for the purpose.

The Duke proposed to Miss Long in the summer of 1811, and was refused; but he by no means lost heart—not imagining that a commoner could sniff at a Royal Duke; and he continued to endeavour to put Dorothy out of his life, one method being to declare his intention of giving up Bushy House. He also wrote to Miss Long making a renewed declaration of his love, and she “wrote him a very proper letter in answer, declining the honour in the most decided terms,” says the Duke of Buckingham in his *Memoirs of the Court of England during the Regency*.

Meanwhile, Dorothy went to Cheltenham about the 16th of September, to act ten times as usual, on alternate nights. Her engagement ended, but it happened she had promised to act one night more to swell the benefit receipts of the manager, Watson. William Oxberry, who was at the theatre that night and who naturally knew nothing of what had gone before, gave an account of the incident in his *Dramatic Biography*, which conveyed the impression that Dorothy received

then the first hint of an intended separation. The Duke believing her engagement ended sent her a letter that afternoon by the hand of General Charitie, his personal friend and confidant, said Edward Stirling, asking her to go straight from Cheltenham to Maidenhead finally to arrange the terms of their parting.

So at last the blow had actually fallen, at last hope was really dead, and Dorothy felt all the anguish of total loss. Boaden says she had a succession of fainting fits, and Oxberry says she became frantic and had hysterics, but they could only know anything about the receipt of the letter from hearsay; Stirling also is so thoroughly wrong in all the facts he gives about her—that the Duke left her to marry Adelaide, for instance—that it practically remains for our own imagination to determine as to how she received the news. She was not a fainting woman, but she may have fainted, and it is doubtful whether she was hysterical. Whatever she felt she refused to entertain the idea of giving up the performance that night and duly appeared on the stage.

One pathetic incident marked the evening in a scene where she should have been accused by a character named Jobson of having been made laughing drunk. The poor thing tried to laugh at her cue, and instead burst into tears, upon which keen-witted Jobson said—

“Why, Nell, the conjuror has not only made thee drunk, he has made thee crying drunk.”

The fact that the Duke had expected her to leave Cheltenham that day, and would await her at a certain time caused Dorothy to have a travelling carriage ready at the stage door as soon as the play was over, into which she got without even stopping to change her theatrical clothes.

Given baldly this sounds rather unbalanced, but it must be remembered that she would have her maid with her, and that a travelling coach was quite commodious enough to be, and indeed often was, used as a dressing-room. Thus Dorothy had no intention of doing her whole journey or of appearing in Maidenhead as Nell.

The interview, which must have been painful enough, took place, but with little tangible result, as Dorothy refused to accept the terms offered by Clarence, but what those terms were no one knows. This summons was not as is always represented the first hint Dorothy had of a separation, nor was the matter settled then by any means. It just happened that Oxberry heard the story of the summons while at Cheltenham, and so, this one incident being definitely known, biographers leapt to the conclusion that it was the only incident in the whole affair.

The Duke went back to Bushy House after seeing Dorothy, and was there during the whole of the next week, perhaps longer, and it is very likely that Dorothy went with him, as there was still much to arrange. Whatever their separate movements the discussion as to terms was prolonged until December.

In October Miss Long, with her little court, went to Ramsgate, and the Duke with George, his son, then Captain Fitzclarence, was staying in the neighbouring town of Margate, it being said that they intended to make "a tour round the island." However, Clarence wanted advice, so he turned from there westward instead of southward, and on the 22nd was dining with his mother at Windsor, starting a day or two later for Ramsgate in the wake of Miss Long.

Whether his royal parent had given him *carte*

blanche, or whether it was his own idea, this impecunious person began to make a great splash at Ramsgate, fitting up the warm baths in a very elegant manner for the benefit of the town, entirely at his own expense; holding on the 28th a great review of the Somerset Regiment of Militia, at which the number of fashionable spectators was very great, and giving the same evening a grand ball to two hundred friends, Miss Long being the object of all this.

That which condemned Clarence above everything, both his good heart and his wit, was that being on such a quest he took with him Dorothy's eldest daughter Sophia, who was then either fourteen or nineteen, probably the latter. That summer she had come out in Court circles under her father's protection at the Carlton House *fête*, that magnificent party by which the Regent, with execrable taste, celebrated the hopeless illness of his father and his own accession to power. Sophia was reported the next day in the usual newspaper phrase as being "an amiable and highly accomplished young lady." All through the summer this young girl was by Clarence's side, hearing him discuss her mother with the people he visited, and watching him—perhaps sympathizing with his endeavours—when he courted Miss Long. Can anything more heartless on a man's part be imagined, and is it to be wondered that Dorothy's girl, thus tutored, left her mother to die and did not even see that her body was given a decent grave?

Miss Tylney Long was an independent young person, and she could not have found it an added attraction in the Duke that he should thus flaunt his family before her eyes, and keep in her mind the woman who had lived with him for twenty years.

Though she was not an actress, she was a commoner, and when she considered she could surely see little security for herself in such a marriage, so she refused the Duke's offers again and again.

Most of the biographers assert that the Tylney Long affair had no foundation excepting in gossip; but they wished to think that and looked for no evidence. Boaden, true to his conception of royalty as something immaculate and divine, says—

“If this were ever a matter of deliberation in the royal mind, I am quite sure it was rejected upon *principle*, and every notion of such a thing was soon closed by the union of the wealthy heiress in March 1812 with Mr. Wellesley Pole, the son of Lord Maryborough.”

However, solid fact is more valuable than virtuous suppositions, and in a letter written on November 3, 1811, by the Hon. Mrs. Calvert,¹ we find “The Duke has proposed for Miss Long, the great heiress, and has promised that the Regent will get the Act of Parliament repealed which prevents the Royal Family marrying subjects. She has refused him, but still encourages him, and some think it will be a match.”

A fortnight later she wrote—

“The Duke of Clarence and his daughter have been paying Lady Darnley a visit. He told her that he had proposed for Miss Long and had been refused, but he did not despair, for he felt sure that the tenth time he would be accepted. Lady Darnley says Miss Long is a very high young lady, ‘Set her up, say I!’ The Duke is going to part with Mrs. Jordan.”

From this we see that the rupture between Dorothy and Clarence had not until then, November 18, been

¹ *An Irish Beauty of the Regency*, by Mrs. Warenne Blake.

talked of generally, though it was known at Richmond, and this note also proves the fallacy of the idea that the summons from Cheltenham marked the total severance of all connection between the two. As a matter of fact, Dorothy was at that time at Bushy House, and there was still considerable trouble over the negotiations, which were being carried on by John Barton for the Prince, and General Samuel Hawker for Mrs. Jordan. The Duke of Buckingham throws some light on the situation—

“After his (the Duke of Clarence) arrival (at Ramsgate) he proposed three or four times more; upon his return to town he sent her an abstract of the Royal Marriage Act, altered, as he said it had been agreed to by the Prince of Wales, whom he had consulted, and also conveyed the Queen’s best wishes and regards—to neither of whom had he said one single word on the subject.”

Now the Duke of Buckingham was a great friend of the Prince Regent’s, and the Prince, being a moral coward, usually—not to state it too bluntly—said that which was most convenient at the moment, so Buckingham’s accusation against Clarence’s truthfulness must not be taken literally. Circumstances point to his having been quite truthful on this matter. Buckingham gives further information, this time about Dorothy, saying that on Clarence’s return to town from Ramsgate he proposed that Dorothy should keep half the children and he would allow her £800 a year.

“But she is most stout in rejecting all compromise, till he has paid her what he owes her; she stating that during the twenty years she has lived with him he has constantly received and spent all her earnings by acting, and that she is now a beggar, by living with

and at times supporting him. This she repeats to all the neighbourhood of Bushy, where she remains and is determined to continue."

This is the only reference I have come across of Dorothy ever speaking a word against the Duke, and seeing the state of mind to which she was reduced it is not wonderful that she was momentarily and outwardly bitter.

Though she knew that Clarence was wishing to marry Catherine Long, she did not know all the details of the affair, and her friends soon repaired this omission. It was, however, left to that arch mischief-maker, the Duke of Cumberland, "who must interfere in everything," to give her a full account of what happened at Ramsgate. She was furious, and wrote Clarence a furious letter. Buckingham says that she also wrote an acknowledgment to Cumberland, and that in the agitation of the moment she made the usual fatal mistake, of directing the letters wrongly. The result was a great quarrel between the brothers, and really between two such men, both delighting in bad language, it would certainly have been a lively scene.

The Duke of Cumberland seems to have taken a great interest in the proceedings, for on October 11, between the meeting at Maidenhead and the Ramsgate visit Dorothy wrote to Clarence: "The Duke of Cumberland has been here for the last two hours, expressing the strongest friendship for me, and hoping that I should not go into the country again, but make a permanent engagement in London. I do not know whether he spoke from *higher authority* than his own, but he seemed very strenuous *on the subject*, he appeared quite at a loss for your going."

It was later than this that Dorothy wrote a long

letter to her *Confidential friend*, a letter in which she shows a brave front to the world, making the very best of the Duke's conduct, trying to console her wounded heart with the superficial praise and promises lavished upon her by the Regent and the Royal Family, and betraying the lengths to which her self-sacrifice could go.

“Bushy, Saturday.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I received yours and its enclosure safe this morning. My mind is becoming somewhat reconciled to the shock and surprise it has lately received, for could *you* or the *world* believe that we have *never* had for twenty years the *semblance* of a *quarrel*, but this is so well known in our domestic circle that the astonishment is *greater!* *Money, money*, my good *friend*, or the *want* of it, has, I am convinced, made *him* at this moment the most *wretched* of *men*, but having done *wrong* he does not like to retract, but with all his excellent *qualities*, and his domestic *virtues*, his love for his *lovely children*, what must he not at this *moment suffer!* His *distress* should have been *relieved before*, but this is *entre nous*.

“All his letters are full of the most unqualified praise of my *conduct*, and it is a heartfelt blessing to know and feel that to the best of my power I have endeavoured to deserve it.

“I have received the greatest kindness and attention from the Regent and every branch of the Royal Family, who in the most *unreserved terms* deplore this melancholy business, the whole correspondence is before the Regent, and I am proud to add that my past and present *conduct* has secured me a friend who

declares he never will forsake me, my forbearance, he says, is beyond what he could have imagined; but what will not a woman do, who is firmly and sincerely attached—had he left me to *starve* I would never have uttered a word to his disadvantage. I enclose you two other letters, and in a day or two you shall see *more*, the rest being in the hands of the Regent. And now, my dear friend, do not hear the poor Duke of Clarence *unfairly abused*; he has done *wrong*, and he is *suffering for it*, but as far as he has left it in his *own power* he is doing *everything kind and noble*, even to the distressing himself. I thank you sincerely for the friendly *caution* at the end of your *letter*, there will, I trust, be no occasion for it, but it was *kind and friendly*, and as such I shall ever esteem it.

“I remain, dear sir,

“Yours sincerely,

“DORA JORDAN.

“These letters are for your eye alone.”

Boaden puts a footnote, “The two letters enclosed by Mrs. Jordan returned to her, faithfully obeying the condition attached to their communication.”

That Dorothy should again assert that she and the Duke had never had a quarrel points to Boaden again as the confidential friend. She had done the same thing early in 1809 when the terms upon which they lived became the subject of public talk, and when also her protective instinct was shown to be stronger than her candour. It is not possible to think, even without evidence to the contrary, that over such events no hint of anger could have been betrayed. The Duke was subject to mad fits of rage, as is evidenced by his public treatment of the Duchess of Kent in later days,

and when obsessed by such he roared like the very bull of Bashan before the whole world. Dorothy herself was quick-tempered, and accustomed to plain speech; thus, in spite of her brave words, they cannot be taken so much as adhering to fact as giving the impression which she desired to be handed on to the public. A curious point in this letter is the caution which her correspondent had given her. Who or what was it against? As far as can be traced the key to it is to be found in the letter she wrote to Clarence, in which she mentions the Duke of Cumberland. Of all the Princes Cumberland bore the worst character for amativeness, and later other crimes were imputed to him. And it is evident that this dangerous person was interesting himself much in Dorothy's affairs, but why? It could not be love, for she was just fifty and had had fourteen children, thus some other motive must have actuated him.

As usual the biographers are vague about these years, and Huish, a contemporary writer, places the Cumberland incident in 1809, but as he crowds many events of different years together, he cannot be taken as exact, though his summing up is worth recording. At this time, he says, extreme moral delinquency was imputed to Clarence, who was labouring under great pecuniary distress; and ruinous measures were resorted to to provide for each day. But "whatever his case, there was no excuse for the Duke to allow Mrs. Jordan to be the object of the rancour and malice of a certain party whose infamous design was to attach criminality to her, and in a point in which she was as pure as the snow which lies in Diana's lap."

Boaden said that the causes of the calumnies during these years were three, concurring to swell the tide of

persecution, while the press was equally well disposed to help each one. And he gives those causes as : First, numerous scribblers who hated the Duke; secondly, a few writers connected with the theatres who were ready to convert Dorothy's virtues into pitch and declare that if she benefited any one "she did it for her body's lust"; thirdly, more important people who tried to engender distrust or disgust in the mind of the Duke of Clarence, hoping that this, joined to his monetary embarrassment, would make him part finally with Mrs. Jordan.

Huish goes further when he insinuates that there was a plot among the royal relatives to ensure a rupture, thus leaving Clarence blameless in the eyes of the world when he married, as they hoped he would do. The Cumberland scandal appears never to have been widely circulated, but it was forced upon Dorothy's notice, and she followed her last letter to Boaden with the following cry of pain—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I should be sorry the letters I have enclosed to you were the only vouchers I could produce to the world, *if necessary*. But, good God ! what will not the world say ? I received two letters this day, telling me that I was accused of *intriguing* with the Duke of Cumberland !

"I am heart-sick and almost worn out with this cruel business; but I am,

"Very gratefully yours,

"DORA JORDAN."

At the end of November matters began to move more quickly. Clarence returned to London about the

10th, and on the 24th was at Portsmouth, continuing with George his "tour round the island." In between those dates he had—as has been seen—been trying his own hand at arranging the settlement, and failing. On the 25th the coming marriage of Miss Tylney Long with Mr. Wellesley Pole was announced, and on the 29th Boaden had conveyed to the public the chief points in Dorothy's letter to him.

She had been negotiating a second engagement with Covent Garden, which was to be "the very last time" she would appear on any stage, so Boaden's paragraph took the following form—

"Mrs. Jordan, it seems, has declined all theatrical engagements at present, on account of the agitation of her feelings, arising from a late extraordinary event, so extraordinary that it is difficult to form any reasonable conjecture on the subject, as nothing has been urged against her conduct, which indeed has received every satisfactory testimony and even soothing communications, from the quarter where objections might be supposed to exist, if they had any existence."

The papers were discreet and perhaps commiserating, for there was scarcely any further public allusion made to the separation, and no stones were thrown to deepen Dorothy's trouble. Clarence remained at Portsmouth ten days and arrived at St. James's on December 5, after which he pushed matters through about the settlement. Rumours were floated that he had increased it to £1200 a year, and then that it would be four times that amount, and at last in the middle of the month the thing was concluded. Dorothy wrote a letter from St. James's dated December 7 (probably copied wrongly by Boaden for 17)—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I lose not a moment in letting you know that the Duke of Clarence has concluded and settled upon me and his children the most liberal and generous provision, and I trust everything will sink into oblivion.

“Yours ever,

“DOROTHY JORDAN.”

In a letter which she wrote to the Duke from Bushy House a little later occurred the paragraph—

“With your arrangements I again *unequivocally repeat* I am most perfectly satisfied, but under *all* circumstances I *did* and had a *right* to expect some consideration from *another quarter*, but I am sorry to say that in an appeal I made to the *mercy* and *munificence* of your Royal brothers, I perceive that they appear totally *ignorant* of the *meaning* of those words.”

What can this mean, read with the earlier letter mentioning the royal brothers, but that she had made great concessions in the agreement under the belief that the Princes intended to safeguard her to some extent?

Years later the Duke's man, Thomas Barton, published to the world the terms upon which the separation was arranged, and they may as well have place here. She was to have the care up to a certain age of her four youngest daughters, for whose maintenance she was to receive £1500, and for their house and carriage £600. For her own use she was given £1500, and £800 to make provision for her elder daughters, not the children of the Duke, which made in all £4400.

Barton adds, “This settlement was carried into effect, a trustee [himself] was appointed, and the monies under such trust were paid quarterly to the

respective accounts at the banking house of Messrs. Coutts and Co. It was a stipulation in the said settlement, that in the event of Mrs. Jordan's resuming her profession, the care of the Duke's four daughters, together with the £1500 per annum for their maintenance, should revert to his Royal Highness. . . . Upon settling the annual allowance to Mrs. Jordan, everything in the shape of a money transaction was brought to account, and the most trifling sums, even upon recollection, were admitted, and interest being calculated upon the whole in her favour to the latest period, the balance was paid over by me on the part of the Duke, and for which I hold Mrs. Jordan's receipt."

On paper this sounds very well, though Barton's further claim that the Duke was liberal, noble and generous to the highest degree will not stand when the matter is examined. To take the money items first. The £600 for the house and carriage was not Mrs. Jordan's at all, but was paid through the bank and the trustee for its specific purpose; the £1500 was to be used for the little girls, including education. The £800 had nothing to do with Dorothy, being paid direct to the daughters by the bankers, and thus Dorothy's income was the mere £1500! Quite enough! those purists will say who can only look on her as a mistress and a thing of nought. But it must be remembered that she could earn very much more than that amount in one year, and that to gain the £1500 she was bound never to act again under pain of losing the children who were so dear to her, children of the ages of 13, 10, 7 and 5. The youngest boy, Augustus, six years old, was taken from her already, as was the eldest girl, Sophia, the darling of her father's heart.

Barton asserts, too, and probably quite truthfully, that everything that Dorothy had lent or given to the Duke was added together, interest calculated and the balance paid over; but he does not say *how* that balance was paid over, and he is careful not to hint that the £800 a year paid to the Ford daughters was the interest on the greater part of that balance. The way in which the Duke settled to pay £1000 towards Dorothea March's marriage settlement is a revelation in the method by which he discharged his liabilities, and it must be remembered that he was worse off in 1811 than he had been in 1809, that his debts were greater, and that, in fact, he was in desperate straits. That he paid over tens of thousands of pounds in money is not to be credited for one moment, though it is quite easy to believe that once again he found parchment an extremely good medium. Whatever may have been the form that his "great generosity" took, Dorothy's affairs showed no signs of increased affluence, not a single act of extravagance is on record to prove that she was in really easy circumstances, one writer declaring to the contrary that she was very needy; and when six months later a new and tremendous demand was made upon her she had no capital with which to meet it.

Her daughters only received £200 a year each, and there was a fourth £200 which is not—historically—allotted to any one, which is another indication of the existence of Hester Bettsworth, who is so consistently ignored by Boaden. In considering this it must not be lost sight of that the very names of the Fitzclarence children at this time have to be sought for, and had they not been of royal parentage would most probably never have been recorded.

On the subject of the giving up of the stage or the children there is something to be said. In the first place, it was Dorothy's own desire that she should give up her profession, one which she had been unable to gratify because of the ever present need of money in the Duke's household. In the second place, this royal Prince could never again hope to benefit by her work, and therefore would at this juncture be quite ready to let her have her will. And in the third he was moved with fatherly solicitude for his children, and would wish that if they were away from him they should have the constant presence and care of their mother.

Dorothy's welcomed absence from the theatre, however, only lasted a few months. When she was, in May 1812, tempted to go again upon the boards she used the Duke's prohibition as an excuse against it, and when she was forced by necessity to take up work again she did as she had done for over twenty years, threw dust into the eyes of the public and shielded the Duke by declaring that she worked to gain money for her elder daughters, and that the Duke had in his great kindness granted her permission to play in the hope that it might improve her health.

CHAPTER XVIII

CUPID V. CASH

“Oh, where among our nobles will you meet
A man so faithful, modest and discreet,
As love-sick Clarence, amorous and gay,
Who steals the ladies’ tender hearts away?
Offers his hand to Long, short, fair and brown,
And gains among the females great renown.”

PETER PINDAR, Jun.

“Had he left me to starve I never would have uttered a word to his disadvantage.”—DOROTHY JORDAN.

It was not unnatural that Catherine Tylney Long should share with the Duke in the attention at this time bestowed upon his hunting of fortune, and Gillray and other caricaturists were busy with pen and brush. One imposing caricature showed a group upon the bank of the Thames at Hampton, with a boat drawn up to the shore. The boatman, Tom Tugg, alias the Duke, stands hat in hand before the heiress, inviting her to take a cruise. Miss Long, grasping large rent rolls and an apron full of gold pieces, has Wellesley Pole by her side, while Dorothy, surrounded by her children, is in the background, crying—

“What, leave your faithful Peggy?”

Miss Long refuses Mr. Tugg quite nicely with, “I am sorry that I can’t be yours, for indeed I find it impossible to resist Mr. Pole!” And that young man remarks, “I’ll tell you what, Master Tugg, you’ll not be first oars here—this little rosebud I intend to pluck for myself; therefore be off.” The Duke answers

Miss Long with, "Why, look you, miss, I'll go on board of a man-of-war, for I cannot bear to see you in the arms of another. Then farewell, my trim-built wherry—and the Rent Roll, then farewell!"

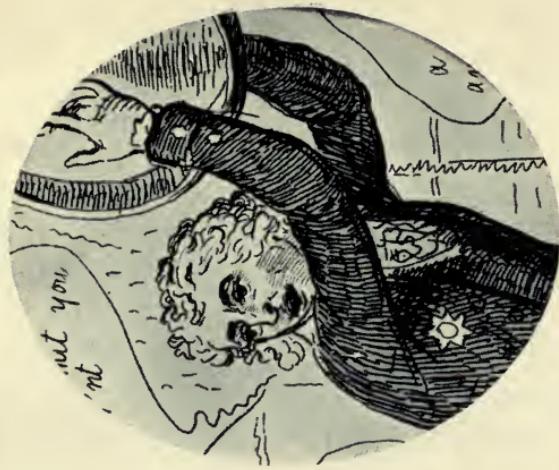
"Princely Amusements," a picture by Gillray, showed the Regent dancing with three befeathered ladies, the Princess of Wales vanishing through the doorway. At a round table, Clarence, York, Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Clarke are playing whist, Clarence saying, "I revoke." Upon the mantelpiece is a pole surmounted by a cockscomb, up which a little white hen is climbing, while a puppy, labelled D. of Cl., is licking its foot. A portrait of the King as Tony Lumpkin, and of the Queen as Old Snuffy, adorn the walls.

This caricature, about which there was nothing lovely, was yet quite refined compared with some concerning the Princes' doings; and that such things were popular shows how eager was the public to watch and criticize these faithless men who had been placed by Providence (!) at the head of the nation; they also show the depths of degradation to which the Throne had sunk when the King and Queen so shared in the public disrespect.

Peter Pindar, Jun., one of the imitators of John Wolcot, wrote many verses upon the Tylney Long incident, caustic verses of a broad humour, not always repeatable, but these three are mild specimens—

"I've illegitimates at home,
And illegitimates abroad;
But now the hour of thought has come
And I'll reform, I will, by G——.

" 'Angel,' quoth he, 'for such thou art,
Come be the sharer of my pillow;
Take, prithee take, my melting heart,
And doom me not to wear the willow.'



SIR RICHARD FORD
FROM A CARICATURE IN THE POSSESSION
OF MR. A. M. BROADLEY



LIEUT. CHARLES POWLETT DOYNE
FROM A MINIATURE IN THE
POSSESSION OF MRS. WHITE, DUBLIN

NO VIMU
AMORALIAO

“I am the offspring of a king,
Yet do I woo thee, gentle maiden ;
I will not leave thee, no such thing,
My love for thee shall be unfading.”

Another satire gave Miss Long’s reply as follows—

“Sir, if your passion is sincere,
I feel for one who is not here ;
One who has been for years your pride,
And is, or ought to be, your bride ;
Shared with you all your cares and joys,
The mother of your girls and boys.

“’Tis cruelty the most refined,
And shows a mean, ungenerous mind,
To take advantage of your power,
And leave her like a blighted flower.

“Return to Mistress Jordan’s arms,
Soothe her and quiet her alarms ;
Your present differences o’er,
Be wise and play the fool no more.”

Poor Catherine ! She was too upright to marry a man who belonged to another, too prudent to risk any disregard of the Marriage Act; but though she chose a scoundrel of the deepest dye, would a better fate have been hers if she had taken “our Billy”? For when that gentleman had spent her money, as he spent Dorothy’s, he would have had every right to turn her adrift, as he did Dorothy, and look out for another woman to help support him. That she should have refused a prince of the blood in so determined a way shows her to have been a person of character, even though she was helped to independence by her inevitable popularity, for Lady Granville wrote of her as refusing men right and left. But the Prince’s pertinacity had shown her that the time had come to make a decision, and, alas! she chose the very worst man possible, the Hon. Wellesley Pole, son of Lord Mornington, Baron Maryborough, and cousin of the Duke of Wellington; one of whom Mrs. Calvert said, “No

one rejoices at Mr. Pole's success. He is an ill-conditioned and, I believe, not a very wise young man." Buckingham avers that Pole was solely indebted to the Duke for his acceptance, and another writer said that in "her terror of Clarence she threw herself into the arms of Pole."

The marriage was solemnized in March 1812, and the very incidents of the ceremony were typical of the rest of her life. She wore a dress which cost six hundred guineas and a necklace worth thirty thousand, but the man who was ready to share her wealth had not even remembered to buy a wedding ring. So the noble party in Lady Tylney Long's drawing-room had to take a rest in the middle of the ceremony while a jeweller was fetched from Piccadilly with a boxful. Thus began a disastrous marriage with a man whose chief ideas of educating his children was to hire French beggar boys, when in Paris, to teach them the lowest oaths, his sons doing a corresponding service for the French boys. He spent all her money, got a mortgage of £100,000 on her property, and spent that, then she had to make him and the woman he lived with an allowance out of her pin money of £13,000. Her horror of him grew so intense that her health gave way, and at last she began proceedings for a divorce, part of the process being to stop his allowance. Upon that he returned suddenly to England, went to see her, and put her in such fear of her life that "she was forced to take refuge in a pantry and to make her escape from the house by the assistance of a Bow Street officer," said the judge in Chancery, when Pole applied for the custody of his children.

She died a few weeks after, in September 1825, but at least she died with her children and sister about

her and in the comfort of a home, blessings which were not allowed to Dorothy. The disreputable Pole passed his later life as a three-hundred-a-year-pensioner on his cousin, the Duke of Wellington.

The failure of the arrangement with the heiress did not turn William's heart back to Dorothy, and Buckingham declares that he wrote to Lord Keith to propose for his daughter Margaret Elphinston, who was in her own right through her mother, Baroness Nairn; this proposal was, "in the most decided and peremptory terms, rejected."

The Duke's further matrimonial quest, of course, became public news, and early in 1812 another cartoon was published, showing him disguised as King Neptune and kneeling before a negress, named Venus Barton, who carries great green bags full of gold. This nymph I have not traced, but she was much cartooned at the time. Her reply to her suitor was much the same as that of the heiress.

"Ha, Massa Neptune, vat you vant?
Me quite up to all your cant;
For if Miss Golden Long would have you,
You would not come to me to sue,
And leave your wife and piccaninnies,
To come and try to take my guineas."

It gives real pleasure to know that for years after this the Duke of Clarence sought in vain for a woman who would marry him. He was credited in 1812 with proposing for a sister of the Czar Alexander; the next year it was announced that he had really opened a treaty of marriage, and early in 1814 Her Serene Highness, under the title of the Duchess of Oldenburg, was met by Clarence on her arrival in the Medway. Now every one was sure of the marriage; but the lady accepted his attentions, stayed weeks in England, was

much caressed—a word very popular then—by the Queen, and then gaily sailed away again. She had cultivated a friendship with the Princess Charlotte, and had perhaps learned too much about the Princes to wish to enter the family.

Clarence then cast his eyes on a Princess of Denmark, and Peter Pindar asserts that Southey wrote two sonnets to her, which William sent as his own production. She, however, refused to have anything to do with “a carpet admiral.” His other serious attempt at marriage was in 1817, when he made love to a young lady named Wykeham, the heiress of all the estates in Oxfordshire left by Lord Wenman. It was at Brighton that the Duke wooed her, telling her that he had not a single farthing, but if she would like to be a Duchess, and perhaps a Queen, he would be happy to arrange it, and he eventually gained her consent by sending her the sonnets written for “sweet Anne of Denmark,” pretending that they were the result of the inspiration gained from Miss Wykeham’s eyes.

This may be contemporary embroidery upon the fact, but the Queen, the Regent, the Lord Chancellor and the Privy Council were all mightily perturbed, and her Majesty was furious when Sweet William went down to Windsor to announce “the happy event” to her. She was sufficiently agitated to put off a Drawing-room, and the Regent, who had been encouraging his brother, turned his back on him when it came to difficulty.

“Do you know Miss Wykeham? She is a fine, vulgar miss,” wrote W. H. Fremantle to the Marquis of Buckingham. “There is nothing talked of but the Duke of Clarence having been refused by the Princess of Denmark, and having proposed since for Miss

Wykeham, who has accepted him. I believe there is no doubt of the truth of this, but it is not thought that they will be allowed to marry," wrote Mrs. Calvert.¹

By March Clarence had been persuaded finally to abandon Miss Wykeham, and Lord Grenville commented, "Whether the love-sick youth is to transfer his flame elsewhere and where I know not." But the love-sick youth had not much chance of doing anything, for the Regent and his mother took his affairs in hand, and before two months were over he was betrothed to Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen. The terms he at first demanded from Parliament were, said the Duke of Kent to Creevey, impossible, being payment of all his debts, a settlement suitable for a Prince who marries for a succession to the throne, and a handsome provision for all his natural children.

When Clarence was King he made Miss Wykeham Baroness Wenman, and she died unmarried in 1870.

* * * * *

During December and January 1812 Clarence was in London except for a week or two spent at Portsmouth, and he did not return to Bushy Park till the end of January, so Dorothy had plenty of time to move her possessions. Simultaneously with her arrival in London arose anew the rumour that she intended to take an engagement at Covent Garden, and would follow Mrs. Siddons after Easter. She was accredited with two London residences, one at Hammersmith, which "also became the partial residence of her illustrious friend," and one in Cadogan Place, Sloane Street, "where she and some of the younger female branches of her family are in future to reside." The inference is that for a time the house in Hammersmith

¹ *An Irish Beauty of the Regency.* By Mrs. Warenne Blake.

was occupied by Dorothy and her little girls, and that when she wanted a town address she used Cadogan Place. Her letters prove that she took a long lease of the latter house and furnished it, and that not only Mrs. Hawker but the Marchs and their two families of children lived there (the General too probably, when not on duty), and kept a home for Dorothy when she needed it.

Until the autumn of 1812 Dorothy lived a private life, and when in May Jones of Covent Garden wrote asking her help for his benefit, she replied, "When it is in my power there is none that I would sooner serve than yourself, but your very good friend Mrs. Lane will explain to you the serious restrictions I am under with respect to my never returning to my profession. I have therefore only to add that I very sincerely wish you every possible success, and such as your merits fully entitle you to."

Who saw after Clarence's little boys of about ten and seven years old, now deprived of their mother's care, is not revealed; but probably Jane Lloyd, who so faithfully kept Dorothy in knowledge of their doings. There is nothing to prove that the latter was forbidden to see them, as has been stated, and she certainly received visits occasionally from her children. For Sophia a chaperone or companion was engaged, probably the lady to whom Dorothy wrote as follows from Cadogan Place—

"DEAR MADAM,

"I should be extremely insensible if your very kind and considerate letter had not afforded me much pleasure. Your opinion of dear Henry, while it does *him* justice, reflects the highest honour on *your* feelings

and observation—he is indeed an admirable boy; I cannot recollect any obligation you owe me for any former expressions of admiration I have made use of, but I trust and feel I shall owe *you* many in your future care and affection towards dear Sophia. I shall feel much pleasure in being personally known to you, and hope you will accompany my dear boy and girl and take a family dinner with us. I will be with Sophy by three."

Sophy by this time was a very gay young person, the papers including her name among the notabilities, such as "To-day the Duke of Clarence and Miss Fitz-clarence arrived in town from Bushy"; "The Duke of Clarence is indisposed at Bushy, Miss Fitzclarence left town immediately to attend him"; "The Duke and Miss Fitzclarence are expected in town to-day," etc.

For some time a lady named Sketchley had been helping with Dorothy's children, and from this period until her death Miss Sketchley remained attached to her and her fortunes; and though she was suspected later of intrigue and even of dishonesty, she was the only person who remained faithful to the end. She accompanied the lonely woman on her tours, nursed her in illness, comforted her in sorrow, and took the place not only of a friend but of that old nurse who had been with Mrs. Jordan for years, and was now pensioned in a little house at Englefield Green, which Dorothy paid for. But the establishment at Hammersmith soon disappeared, for in the summer a new and bitter trouble arose.

Thomas Alsop had left his work, or it had left him; he was heavily in debt, and it was necessary that his

affairs should be examined. The result proved that he was financially ruined, and Dorothy took much of this burden upon her shoulders. Probably to save the man from imprisonment she mortgaged part of her income from the Prince, and then that she might live she had again to go on the stage. So for a scamp like Alsop and a giddy fool like Frances, Dorothy had to give up the society of her little children, the quiet comfort which the Duke's various payments afforded—as long as they were continued—and a large part of the £1500 a year which remained to her; and once again, more alone and bereft than ever, take up the weary round over the country in pursuit of work. But where was that great sum which the Duke had paid over to her in discharge of all she had paid and lent during twenty years?

Boaden and succeeding biographers have placed the Alsop trouble in 1814, but its true date was 1812, though Frances remained a care to the end.

Dorothy caused Alsop to insure his life for his wife's sake and paid the premium herself, and then cast about for some method of providing for him. When, in November 1812, Lord Moira was appointed Governor-General of Bengal and Commander-in-Chief of the forces in India, some good friend found her the way. It may have been worked through the Duke of Clarence, for M'Mahon, the Regent's Comptroller of the Household, had something to do with it. Thus, when in April 1813 Lord Moira embarked for India he carried in his train a scallywag who called himself one of his under-secretaries as an excuse for his presence. Dorothy and her daughter Frances never again saw Thomas Alsop; their part was to repair the damage he had done—a part which Frances entirely repudiated.

There can be no doubt but that the Duke was consulted, personally or through his agent, upon all this, and gave what help he could; and that Dorothy's representations as to the permanent inroads Alsop had made upon her income convinced him that the only course was to keep to their bargain—that is, to take the children back to his own home, and reclaim the £1500 for their maintenance and the £600 for their house and carriage. This would leave Dorothy with her own £1500 and the £800 for her daughters. Frances's share of that £800 was perhaps pledged to her husband's creditors, for during the next few years she had no income; the rest belonged to the other daughters, while Dorothy's own allowance was also partly pledged, though to what extent it is difficult to say. Dr. Townsend Young declares that she then had but £200 a year left, and that much had gone to pay her own debts. She herself speaks of having sunk about £300 for Frances's benefit, and does not mention what went for Alsop's debts or her own. However, to judge of the way in which Dorothy lived in France, an income of £200 seems to be more than could be accounted for. In addition to the mortgage on her income, Dorothy must from time to time have paid heavy lump sums upon the Alsop debts, for she complained that she had spent all her money on one to the exclusion of those who better deserved it. This referred to the fact that she had been in the habit of making an allowance to her sons when they went into the world, and that this had been interrupted by the needs of her son-in-law.

So, seeing what was before her, Dorothy once more made use of Boaden, as usual taking the onus of her new departure upon herself, and extolling the Duke

for his goodness in relieving her from her promise to act no more.

“ Cadogan Place, Thursday.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I fear I must have appeared unmindful of your many kindnesses in having been such a length of time without writing to you; but really, till very lately, my spirits have been so depressed that I am sure you will understand my feelings when I say it cost me more pain to write to those interested about me than to a common acquaintance; but the constant kindness and attention I meet with from the Duke, in every respect but personal interviews (and which depends as much on my feelings as his), has in a great measure restored me to my former health and spirits. Among many noble traits of goodness, he has lately added one more, that of exonerating me from my promise of not returning to my profession. This he has done under the idea of its benefiting my health and adding to my pleasures and comforts, and though it is very uncertain whether I shall ever avail myself of this kindness, yet you, if you choose, are at liberty to make it known, whether publicly or privately. I wish I could see you; but it is such a long way for you to come.

“ Yours ever, etc.,

“ DORA JORDAN.”

By August 1812 the new Drury Lane Theatre was nearly finished, and its opening in the autumn was being discussed, so paragraphs appeared at the end of the month to the effect that Mrs. Jordan was “preparing some magnificent dresses for a provincial tour. It is more probable, however, that they are intended to grace the opening of the new theatre in Drury Lane.

But such an actress needs not the outward aid of ornament, as she has the powerful recommendation of first-rate comic genius."

She probably *was* thinking of Drury Lane, for negotiations as to an engagement went on for some time, falling through at last because she and "the Theatrical Committee of Drury Lane are at variance as to the terms upon which she is negotiating for an engagement, and the lady finds that she can employ herself better in a provincial ramble than even at a magnificent theatre in the metropolis."

On October 1 that autumn Clarence went with the Queen and the Prince Regent to inspect the new Drury Lane before it opened. One wonders whether any painful memory of the old theatre and all he had gained in it assailed him!

So in the autumn Dorothy went again on tour. In September she was playing at Plymouth, her benefit on the 28th drawing a brilliant and overflowing house; then she went to Portsmouth, and before the close of the year she was at Leicester, where the young Macready saw her for the first time, and acted under her directions. His impressions of her, given in his *Reminiscences*, show her as one absorbed in her work while at work, quick to make the very best of the material at her hand, and wise in enriching that material with her praise. The following, it must be remembered, was written when she was fifty-one years old.

"All the attributes of Thalia were most joyously combined in Mrs. Jordan. With a spirit of fun that would have outlaughed Puck himself there was a discrimination, an identity with her character, an artistic arrangement of the scene that made all appear spontaneous and accidental, though elaborated with the

greatest care. Her voice was one of the most melodious I ever heard, which she could vary by certain bass tones, that would have disturbed the gravity of a hermit; and who that ever heard that laugh of hers could ever forget it? The words of Milman would have applied to her: 'Oh, the words laughed on her lips!' Mrs. Nesbit, the charming actress of a later day, had a fascinating power in the sweetly ringing notes of her hearty laugh, but Mrs. Jordan's laugh was so rich, so apparently irrepressible, so deliciously self-enjoying as to be at all times irresistible. Its contagious power would have broken down the serenity of Lord Chesterfield himself."

This tribute to her qualities Macready followed with a description of her method at a rehearsal of *The Wonder*: "I remarked, as I watched this charming actress intently through her first scene, how minute and how particular her directions were; nor could she be satisfied till by repetition she had seen the business executed exactly to her wish. The moving picture, the very life of the scene was perfect in her mind, and she transferred it in all its earnestness to every movement on the stage."

Macready was nervous, but Dorothy's good-nature soon relieved him, and when he said something well she paused, apparently in a sort of surprise, "and, with great and grave emphasis, said, 'Very well, indeed, sir!'" which gave him his perfect self-possession. "Where was there a Violante who could, like her, excite the bursts of rapture in an audience. . . . The mode in which she taught Flora to act her parts was a lesson to make an actress . . . the effects these gifted individuals produced on their audiences was such as succeeding aspirants have never been able to excel."



DOROTHY JORDAN

FROM A PASTEL BY JOHN RUSSELL, R.A. REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH
IN THE POSSESSION OF DR. G. C. WILLIAMSON

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Finishing at Leicester with *The Belle's Stratagem*, Dorothy went further north, and the next place she is mentioned as visiting is Newcastle. In January 1813 she was acting for seven nights at Bath, and on February 12 she commenced a two years' engagement at Covent Garden by playing Violante in *The Wonder*. The audience hailed her with repeated shouts of delight. Over twenty years before the superfine moral sense of the great British public, which loved to delude itself upon its own virtue, had shown its scorn, hissing and abusing her, but that could never happen again. What though she had grown fat, and was growing old? She was their one comedian for them in England, and they welcomed her with all their hearts. However, one poor cowardly and cantankerous spirit hissed loudly enough to be heard all over England, one that never missed an opportunity of railing against the Princes. A writer upon *The Times* had already found that it was dangerous to attack royalty too openly, and so by crushing Mrs. Jordan hoped to reach Clarence. Truth was of no importance; had not the paper's own representative been punished for telling the truth, and a prince's mistress deserved castigating anyhow. So this unknown writer used *The Times* as his shield, and flung not one stone but a whole shower of stones in the face of the woman whose life had become a tragedy of self-sacrifice. The article itself is not worth reproducing, but here are two or three paragraphs showing its virulence and coarseness¹:

“Here they [the playgoers] had found a woman that, after forming her experience by a personal trial of almost every possible condition of life, had at length crowned her career by a full admission to the

¹ *The Times*, February 11, 1813.

knowledge [of high life] which but for her [? otherwise] had been hopeless; a woman who, like Lady Wortley Montagu, had been admitted into the secrets of harems and palaces, seen their full exhibition of nude beauty and costly dissoluteness; the whole interior pomp of royal pleasure, the tribes of mutes and idiots, sultans and eunuchs, slavish passion and lordly debility. The price paid for this indulgence was probably in both cases equally peculiar; but in both the reward was knowledge, not attainable on lighter terms. We are not then to wonder that Mrs. Jordan's return should excite the utmost extravagance of popular curiosity. The sentiment has been the same before she was born to delight princes. . . .

“This woman, to whom *nature* has had so few reserves, whose ‘proper study,’ as Pope says, ‘has been man,’ whose opportunities of study have been furnished, in the course of a diligent life, from every rank and every age; who has adopted Shakespeare’s conception in its fulness, and come ‘home to the hearts and the bosoms of men,’ with such unremitting assiduity; who has, eminently above all other women, deserved the renowned motto of ‘*Humani nihil alienum*,’ even she failed last night to give pleasure. . . . Is not the public forced to find the alternative for this degraded woman’s appearance in the decline of life either in her own vile avarice or in the viler breach of stipulation by those who should never abandon her to poverty? We cannot believe that the latter is the case; and if the former, what share of public approbation should be permitted to one for whom it is impossible to feel any share of personal respect? Whose sons and daughters are now strangely to move among the honourable people of England,

received by the Sovereign, and starting in full appetite for royal patronage, while their mother wanders, and is allowed to wander, from barn to barn and from town to town, bringing shame on the art which she practices, and double shame on those who must have had it in their power to send her back to penitence and obscurity."

It was an unusually bitter and cowardly attack, even at a time when men like Cobbett and *The Times* writer still believed in chivalry, but were always careful before exercising it to knock the woman down.

Many papers took up the cudgels in Dorothy's defence, among them *The Morning Post*, *The News*, *The Sun*, *The Theatrical Inquisitor* and *Bell's Weekly*, and the playgoing public showed its resentment in the theatre. When, some nights later, Dorothy was playing Nell, and one of the characters addressed to her this sentence, "You have an honest face and need not be ashamed of showing it anywhere," the play was stopped by shouts of approval, followed by three rounds of applause, which so overcame her that she burst into tears.

Dorothy heard of this article in *The Times*, but did not trouble even to see it; however, the Duke must have been troubled, and it appears as though his factotum, Barton, drew Dorothy's attention to the duty (!) she owed her princely light-o'-love. Barton reproduced the letter she then wrote to the papers, and which was widely circulated when, ten years afterwards, he had to make a public defence of the Duke, and he introduced that letter into his defence in the following words: "Reflections were thrown out against both the Duke and herself; whereupon Mrs. Jordan, *indignant at the attack upon His Royal Highness*, wrote the

following letter, which was published in the papers of the day." The italics are mine; she had, of course, no cause to be indignant on her own account. That some such negotiation went on is proved by the fact that Dorothy's dignified and restrained letter did not appear until more than a week after the accusatory article.

"SIR,

"Though I did not see the morning print that contained the paragraph alluded to in your liberal and respectable paper of yesterday, yet I was not long left in ignorance of the abuse it poured out against me; this I could silently have submitted to, but I was by no means aware that the writer of it had taken the opportunity of throwing out insinuations which he thought might be injurious to a no less honourable than illustrious personage.

"In the love of truth, and in justice to His Royal Highness, I think it my duty, publicly and unequivocally, to declare that his liberality towards me has been noble and generous in the highest degree. But, not having it in his power to extend his bounty beyond the term of his own existence, he has, with his accustomed goodness and consideration, allowed me to endeavour to make that provision for myself which an event—that better feelings than those of *interest* made me hope I shall never live to see—would entirely deprive me of.

"This, then, sir, is my motive for returning to my profession. I am too happy in having every reason to hope and believe that, under these circumstances, I shall not offend the public at large by seeking their support and *protection*, and, while I feel that I possess

those, I shall patiently submit to that species of unmanly persecution which a female so particularly situated must always be subject to. Ever ready to acknowledge my deficiencies in that respect, I trust I may add that I shall never be found wanting in candour and gratitude, nor forgetful of the care that every individual should feel for the good opinion of the public.

“I am, sir,

“Your much obliged, humble servant,

“DORA JORDAN.”

From that time until into June Dorothy was acting at Covent Garden. On June 22 both she and Mrs. Siddons, who had then retired from the stage, appeared to swell the receipts for the benefit of the Theatrical Fund at the new Drury Lane, which had opened the previous October. Mrs. Siddons was Lady Randolph in the play of *Douglas*, and Dorothy was Beatrice in *The Panel*, the results being satisfactory to the extent of £983. At the end of July Mrs. Jordan went to Ryde to open the new theatre there. “We have heard that it was filled every night; as Mrs. Jordan performed there it is not to be wondered at.” From Ryde she should have gone to Brighton where she had played several times before, and once more had been obliged to insist upon her “usual terms.” In this plan, however, she found herself face to face with a difficulty, and the Brighton visit was put off until December. For, just at the time of her engagement, the Regent, the Duke of Clarence and her daughter Sophia were at the Pavilion, while the papers announced that the Queen, with two of the Princesses, intended to join the party. The awkwardness of such

possible meetings was too much for Dorothy, and so the engagement was postponed, and she went instead to Portsmouth, Guildford and other southern towns.

It was a position to make the gods laugh! The father and daughter inmates of a palace—"The Prince of Orange and Miss Fitzclarence led the dance at the Regent's ball at Brighton. The Duke of Clarence danced with great vivacity"—the mother travelling from town to town to earn a living, and shrinking from showing herself in the same place as the man to whom she had given everything, and with whom she was forbidden to communicate in any way.

When, at the beginning of January 1814, the Duke of Clarence went on a visit to Holland, and started on the long drive to Deal as early as 7.45 in the morning, "his numerous family" were gathered on the steps of his house in Stable Yard, St. James's Palace, to take an affectionate leave of their loving father. There is no hint anywhere that the mother, who loved this same family passionately, was ever blessed on her going out or her coming in by a sight of their happy faces watching her.

From the autumn of 1813 until the spring of 1815 Dorothy was acting constantly. Whitehaven, Margate, Brighton, Sheffield, Carlisle, Blackburn, Birmingham, Brussels and many other places unnamed were visited by her. In January 1814 she was again at Bath, and from February to June, barring an interval of severe illness in March, she filled her engagement at Covent Garden, acting on April 20 in a new comedy, *Debtor and Creditor*, said to be the last new part she ever took.

In spite of age and size her popularity continued, for she had secured the hearts of the people. "To

praise Mrs. Jordan is an act of officious superfluity, yet we cannot refrain from testifying the uncommon delight of the audience and ourselves at her personation of Rosalind; the triumph of mind over matter in this wonderful performance was complete. Her voice, manner and look were all in perfect conformity with the character; the depredations of time and the disadvantages of person are forgotten in our admiration of that *naïveté*, vivacity and irresistible expression of nature which characterizes every tone and motion. There is no actress whose loss will be more generally felt or less easily supplied." (*Theatrical Inquisitor*.)

But, in spite of such brave words from her friendly critics, Dorothy knew that she could not work much longer; her fits of illness—probably brought on by over-exertion and exposure to all the draughts and hardships of stage life—recurred with alarming frequency, and she was too old for the only parts she could play most successfully. Yet for need's sake she persevered. A letter from Margate in the summer of 1814 gives an impression of her life when in this town, which had always heartily welcomed her, and it showed her still affectionately regardful of her friends, the Lloyds, at Teddington.

"Margate, August 24, 1814.

"MY DEAR JANE,

"I hope this will find you as well as I wish. I enclose the cap for your dear mother, to whom and the rest of the family I beg my love. This place is very pleasant now. I concluded my engagement last Saturday, which turned out very well. I am anxious to hear of John's business. The libraries are crowded every night; it is the only public amusement. I have

gone there every night and have met with so much attention and respect that were both embarrassing and pleasing. Seats for me and my friend are kept every night, and when it is known whom they are for nobody will attempt to sit in them. I have not been very well; I have had spasms across my kidneys—very painful indeed. I have just heard from dear George and Dora, who is going on very well. Adieu, dear Jane, for the present."

The cap was a yearly gift, first sent at the time when the Lloyds took the children to educate, as is shown by a note sent to Frances all those years before, enclosing the first such present, with Mrs. Jordan's affectionate regards and adding, "I hope to have the same pleasure every year on the same occasion."

Directly after the date of the letter Dorothy sailed from Margate for Ostend on her way to Brussels, from which place she planned to go to Lille and Paris. But this plan was not carried out; she returned to Margate on September 19, giving her friends an animated picture of the gaiety of Brussels. Was it sentiment which took her to the sociable Belgium town? It is at least a coincidence that Clarence had, on his way home in the spring of the year, spent a month there.

CHAPTER XIX

THOSE DOROTHY LOVED

“Children are earthly idols that hold us from the stars.”—DOUGLAS JERROLD.

“To the winds, to the waves, to the woods I complain,
Ah, well-a-day, my poor heart!
They hear not my sighs, and they heed not my pain,
Ah, well-a-day, my poor heart!

“To the sun’s morning splendour the poor Indian bows,
Ah, well-a-day, my poor heart!
But I dare not worship where I pay my vows,
Ah, well-a-day, my poor heart!”

From Song sung by Dorothy Jordan.

WHILE acting in Stratford in October 1814 Dorothy wrote to the manager of the theatre at Blackburn, offering to play there one or two nights toward the end of the month, “having experienced much kindness and attention during my short [earlier] stay at Blackburn . . . this time a clear half,” and she asked that the reply should be sent to Sheffield. But at Sheffield she had an attack of illness and only played one night, an illness brought on by her anxiety about her two boys, George and Henry, who had with twenty-three other officers got into military trouble.

George the eldest had been much out in the Peninsula, having in 1811 had his horse shot under him at Fuentes d’Onoro, been wounded and taken prisoner, though he contrived to escape in the confusion. On his return home he was promoted to a troop in the 10th Hussars, and went out again in 1813, his brother Henry accompanying him in the same regiment. Their chief officer was Colonel George Quentin, who appar-

ently possessed little of the martial spirit, so little that on the return to England twenty-five of his commissioned officers preferred four charges against him, consisting of neglect and abandonment of duty, leaving some of his divisions without orders or support when attacked by the enemy, entirely leaving his regiment in one battle, and allowing a relaxed discipline.

The result of these charges was a court-martial for the Colonel in October 1814, with a view, not to judging him fairly, but to re-establishing his character and punishing his detractors. The trial was a pure mockery, the feeling in military high quarters being at that day—perhaps it is in this—that the men should suffer all things gladly, even being given over to death and imprisonment by an incapable officer. The first charge was proved, the others were dismissed, and Colonel Quentin was reprimanded, then acquitted and finally reinstated at the head of his regiment. The twenty-five inferior officers were kicked out, and one by one were drafted into other regiments, their swords being forfeited. This was attributed to the influence of the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief, backed up by the Prince Regent, both of whom fell under strong public obloquy because of their partiality.

The two Fitzclarence boys—George was then twenty and Henry two years younger—were the especial object of their uncle's wrath, being not only turned out of their regiment, but banished to India. Even that was not enough, for the Regent's man, Colonel M'Mahon, wrote to the superior officer under whom they sailed, that he should treat them with marked disrespect and severity. This gallant officer answered that he "had received the colonel's letter, and that he should have returned it with the contempt

it deserved, but that he chose to retain it that he might have it in his power to *expose* him, should such unfair and offensive conduct be repeated, and that no British officers would be dictated to in their line of conduct with those under their command."

Dorothy loved these boys so much that worry over the trial, which occurred towards the end of October, was quite enough to incapacitate her from work, and so to lose her a considerable sum of money. The following letter alludes to this as well as to the affairs of Alsop, whose insurance money she was still paying, though he had been gone from England a year and a half. The insurance society had evidently demanded a larger fee because of the extra risk of life in a foreign land.

"Whitehaven, November 11th, 1814.

"MY DEAR [Edward March],

"This moment only have I received both your letters, therefore you will not be surprised that I grew uneasy. The other half of the cheque you will have received by this time; so far all is right. It was from Howard's own mouth that I got the disagreeable information, that I was liable to pay the additional insurance on Alsop's life. I need not tell you, my dear [Edward], how much obliged I should be to you if you would regularly arrange this very disagreeable and unfortunate business for me. I trust that the heavy addition will be *prevented*, and I am truly sorry that you have not been *comfortable*. What has been the matter?

"I have been very ill, but do not let them know of it at home. So much so, that I was obliged to give up my engagement at Sheffield after playing only one

night, which was doubly unlucky from the prospect there was of great success. I lose £150 by it. I am doing very well *here*, but the theatre is not large enough. God bless you all!

“Your affectionate,

“D. J.

“P.S.—I believe I shall go to Edinburgh—but Newcastle first.”

March must have written her some letter of complaint, perhaps upon the ever-pressing subject of money, or even more likely upon Mrs. Alsop, who was then living in Cadogan Place, and who about this time committed an unforgivable sin in Dorothy's eyes.

In this the biographers once again show their casualness about dates, indeed, scarcely a fact they assert can be accepted in point of time without corroboration. For instance, they all pack into one year the Alsop ruin, and the banishment of the Fitzclarences, yet the two events were just two years apart. Boaden actually gives cause and effect in the matter of Frances Alsop, and quite unconsciously puts the cause later than the effect, making her letters to the Duke the result of having to support herself upon nothing.

But as a matter of fact she still was, as she ever had been, her mother's care, and was being supported by her. However, being more or less deprived of money for extravagance she was miserable, for she was a spendthrift in every way. Casting about for a means of securing what she wanted her thoughts naturally went to the Duke of Clarence, and resulted in a series of “virulent and violent letters,” by which she hoped to get money. She may have enjoyed writing the letters, but he naturally objected to receiving them,

for Frances knew all there was to know about the monetary transactions between him and her mother, and was in a situation both to make pressing demands, and to say very pointed things.

The useful Barton—and a witness named Wilkes—went to Cadogan Place and interviewed Mr. March (Dorothy being in the North at the time). That March was known to be in monetary difficulties is shown by the fact that he was suspected of being the instigator of these letters. However, he managed to clear himself entirely, and gave all the necessary assurances.

He, of course, wrote to Dorothy on the matter, and the following is one of the letters sent in return by the distracted mother.

“Carlisle, Saturday, December 3rd, 1814.

“I was prevented by illness, both of body and mind, the last time I wrote, from saying one half of what it is necessary should be now perfectly understood with regard to Mrs. Alsop. You say that in order to assist her you must spend £30 or £40. I am sorry for it, as it will not be in my power to *reimburse* you; and trust the love and duty you owe to your own family will interfere, and point out to you the injustice of it. You talk of Mrs. A.’s *desire* to go to her husband. If it were affection or duty that prompted her I should pity, though even in that case it would at this time be out of my power to forward her wishes; but this is not the case, as you must *know*. I have at present melancholy, but far better claims on me—claims that, to my bitter remorse, I have almost deprived myself of the means of affording to two amiable children by having lavished them on *one*. She never could have been sensible of the sacrifice, or I should not have met with such

ingratitude. For the last time, dear [Edward], shall this subject ever employ my pen, and I trust you will give it the attention I feel due to it. In the event of Mrs. A.'s going abroad, I must sink another £100 per year to the £260 (independent of the additional insurance on A.'s life), making in all near £400 a year. He has no employment, and how will he support her? And am I to have the additional misery of thinking that she may be *starving* in a *foreign* land? I therefore, for the *last time*, most solemnly declare to *her*, through you, that these are the last and only propositions that shall ever be offered. THAT she shall go to her uncle in Wales, when I will pay £40 a year for her board and lodging, allowing her £50 a year for clothes, till such time [as] her husband may be able to maintain her abroad, when every exertion shall be made to send her out. If she refuses this, I here *swear*, by the most heart-breaking oath that presents itself to my tortured mind, that 'may I never again see *those two sacrificed young men*, if I ever (if possible) think of her again, as a child that has any claim on ME.' And I shall be led to doubt the affection of any one who may, by a mistaken motive, endeavour to make me break an oath so seriously and solemnly taken. If she has an atom of feeling, and wishes to regain any part of my affection, she will *instantly* agree to this; if NOT the £90 a year shall be regularly paid to her so long as I have it to give. Let her not look on this as a *banishment*, let her look on the fate of two gallant young men, submitting to a cruel exile without a *murmur*, whatever they may feel. I shall send a plan to Mrs. Williams, and shall be under the disagreeable necessity, my dear [Edward], of withdrawing from you the little addition I could have wished to continue to you. When every-

thing is adjusted, it will be impossible for me to remain in England. I shall, therefore, go *abroad*, appropriating as much as I can spare of the remainder of my income to pay my debts. And now, my dear [Edward], for the last time on this cruel subject, adieu! I write this from a sleepless pillow. God bless you all! I shall be home by the 15th or 16th. I have been obliged to give up all my engagements. Love to all.

“Your affectionate,

“D. J.

“For the little time I shall be in C[adogan] Place, after the departure of all happiness; tell dear Lucy that I will pay her three guineas per week, for myself, Miss S., and the two servants, finding our own tea, sugar and wine. Be silent on the subject of my going *abroad*, or it may *embarrass* me.”

The postscript of this proves that Lucy Hawker was the actual or temporary (Dora being ill) house-keeper at Cadogan Place, just as a postscript to a later letter shows that Dora March was settled there. Thus Dorothy's three eldest children with their belongings—both Hawkers and Marchs had several children—were living in a house leased and furnished by Dorothy. Consistent self-sacrifice is a virtue carried to its extreme, and therefore a mistake. If Dorothy's nature had not been so “loving and giving,” if she had in her turn demanded, her children might have had more independence and backbone, they might not have taken with two hands and refused to give with one. Sorrows had come so thickly upon her, that she thought the loss of her two eldest sons must mark the supreme misery. Poor thing!

it was well that she could not see what was still to come.

The uncle who was to receive Frances was Dorothy's brother Nathaniel, living then quietly in the little country place, Trelethyn. Taking into account his gentle, retiring nature, he would have been worthy of pity had he really been saddled with the company of such a rip. Alsop eventually secured the post of chief magistrate in Calcutta, and held it to his death in 1826, living there with a white woman by whom he had three children, and for whom a subscription was raised when he departed this life.

By this letter it is obvious that Frances was no longer drawing from Coutts's bank her £200 a year; either it was not being paid by the Duke, or it was ear-marked for the creditors. Had she still got it her mother would not be offering to raise with difficulty £90 a year for her support. It also shows that Dorothy was in desperate need of money, as, though she made £150 by an engagement, she could not repay the sum of £30 expended by March on her daughter's behalf; and, to pay the £90 a year for Frances, she must withdraw "the little allowance" she would have wished to continue to her favourite son-in-law. Could a person enjoying an independent income of over £2000 a year (according to Barton) and earning as much again, have been so troubled over £30?

It must be noted that even then Dorothy looked upon France as a possible resort, where she could get rest from the demands made upon her, and also by being there in the worst parts of the year improve her health. So thoroughly was she looking forward to this that she was offering first to one son-in-law and

then to the other the chance of taking the house, in which both lived, off her hands.

There had evidently been a suggestion on the part of Frances Alsop that she should go out to India and join her husband, and either she or some one else had added the idea that she should go in the same ship as her half-brothers George and Henry. This Dorothy knew would not be feasible, though she wrote to George about it. Her next letter deals with this point, a letter which followed quickly upon the other.

“Carlisle, Sunday, December 4th, 1814.

“MY DEAR [Edward],

“When I received your letter relative to Fanny, I immediately wrote to George, without endeavouring to prejudice him in the smallest degree, but was not at all surprised at the enclosed answer, which you may show [to her] or not, as you shall judge best. You have, of course, received my last. I will spare what I can to send her to Wales, and enable her uncle to receive her comfortably. Whenever Alsop is in a situation to provide for, or maintain, her abroad, I will exert my utmost to send her to him.

All personal discussions on such subjects are doubly painful, therefore, my dear [Edward], to prevent such I take the opportunity of repeating this by letter, and, in future, I have only to refer Fanny to my last letter to you. If she and Mrs. Williams should prefer living in any cheap part of France, they may do it to more advantage. It is very probable that I shall find it necessary to live there the best part of every year. Dear George’s account of everybody in Cadogan Place, gives me great pleasure. I could wish Mrs. Alsop and Mrs. Williams would make up their minds

before I return. I shall be back, if those dear boys go *soon*, by the 15th or 16th. God bless you all.

“Yours affectionate,

(Signed) “D. J.”

The letter from Captain George Fitzclarence—

“London, December 2nd, 1814.

“MY DEAREST MOTHER,

“Nothing is yet settled when we start; but we are to go out in Admiral Boulton’s ship, who goes out to take command in India. I am now certain to join Lord Moira; but, if anything is said about it, the Duke of York will give me positive orders to join my horrid regiment.¹ I really think we go out in the happiest way, and *ought*, if we choose to stay long enough, to make our fortune. My father, poor soul, has suffered much, but is now better; his anxiety actually made him very ill, but both go in the same ship, which is a great comfort. Although we are a long way from each other (700 miles), yet I hope, should any good situation offer, to bring Henry to Calcutta. The girls have made up their minds to it very well. March did not mention anything about Fanny; but I cannot take her on board the King’s ship. It will be impossible; I would not shackle myself with her. M’Mahon gives me the most *certain assurances* of Alsop being provided for. I will do all I can; but I cannot take Fanny out with us. It will cost £3000 to get us out to India—where is all this to come from?”

Here the letter breaks off unfinished.

¹ George had been transferred to the 24th Light Dragoons, then in India, but hoped to be retained in the suite of Lord Moira.

George Fitzclarence ended this part of his letter as most of Dorothy's children seem to have ended their affectionate intercourse with her, on the "money" note: "Where is all this to come from?" He probably knew that his mother would be ready to sell her frocks, her house, her comfort and her health to help in such a difficulty, and he knew also that his father, "poor soul," was too helpless, too extravagant, too penniless to give them so much money. Between her fits of illness Dorothy was working at the top of her strength, and what for? That she might get free of Alsop's difficulties, settle Frances Alsop, smooth the path of Edward March, and find money to help "two gallant young men" to go out to exile in comfort.

The receipt of George's letter raised vague fears in her mind, and she at once wrote to the people who acted as go-between with her and the Duke, the kindly family who were always ready to soothe her with news. She does not write to the Duke, even epistolary communication had been stopped, and yet it is evident that her heart was filled with sympathy and affection for him.

"Mrs. Jordan at Carlisle to Miss Lloyd, Teddington, Middlesex:

"Sunday, December 6th, 1814.

"I do not know, my dear Jane, how to acknowledge or value sufficiently your kind, considerate and friendly letter. I write this from my bed—by all accounts the dear Duke has been very ill, he has *indeed*, for I can judge of his heart by my own, formerly we supported each *other*, but when I reflect what those dear gallant boys have done, I feel nothing but—never mind, have they not acted according to

their feelings of honour, and what can a man do more? I do not understand where Henry is to be—at least 700 miles from his brother, but *where?* I shall be back on the 15th or 16th of this month. I am not able to continue my engagements. I have kept my bed many days to the moment of my going to the theatre. My nights have been *literally* sleepless, and if it was not for a few hours' sleep in the day I think my mind and memory would have suffered very much. . . . Miss S. is all kindness and attention. Dear, affectionate Frederick has told me of your kindness in constantly writing; your account of Sophy's conduct gives me much pleasure. Tell dear Eliza and Mary that I will write soon. Love to your dear mother.

“Yours affectionately,

“D. J.D.

“Going to bed with a raging headache.”

In the next letter she offers the house to the General, and repeats her intention of going abroad if she cannot go on with her work.

“Carlisle, December 6th, 1814.

“MY DEAR EDWARD,

“I shall be home by January¹ 15th or 16th. Truly sorry am I to be under the necessity of disturbing dear Dora [then recovering from a confinement]; sooner than do so, if I was not very unwell, I would take lodgings. The enclosed to the General contains a proposition, similar to the one I made you, concerning the house, which, if it does not appear eligible to him, I shall dispose of as soon as possible; and, if not able to follow my profession, I shall immediately go abroad. God bless you!

“D. J.

¹ A mistake for December.

“P.S.—I trust in God you will exert yourself in pointing out to Fanny the *absolute necessity* of her prompt compliance with the proposal; in which case, she shall ever find me her mother and friend.”

The last letter in this series shows the beginning of the shadow which was to cover and blacken the end of her life.

“MY EVER DEAR [Edward],

“I thank your kind and considerate letter and reap all the consolation from it that my present melancholy situation will allow of. I inclose the notes. I have just written to dear Dora. God bless you all.

“D. J.”

One may imagine Edward March helpful, agreeable, ever fascinating to Dorothy, giving her sympathy and kindly words, yet adding his petition to those of all the others. “I am in such and such a difficulty, it is very little, if you would help me, simply a temporary affair; you know you may trust me to repay it,” etc. And then, grateful for his sympathy, trusting and believing in him she sends him the notes for which he begs, either bank notes or notes of hand, the space for the amount left blank!

Mrs. Alsop had no intention of going to Wales, nothing but London with its life and variety would suit her, and when her brother-in-law, indignant at the visit of Barton which she had brought upon him, forbade her ever again, while in his house—*his* house, modest man!—to write another letter of the kind, she packed her things and left her mother’s home for good. It is to be hoped that this happened before Dorothy’s return to London, and that she had not to

endure the pain of seeing her go. Frances intended to have amusement at any cost, so she "assumed a conduct which cannot but be deeply regretted." The result of which conduct was shown when she was acting in the autumn.

Dorothy's reputation was sufficient to gain Mrs. Alsop an engagement at Drury Lane, which began on October 18, 1815, and during which she acted Rosalind five times and the Country Girl once, "and that, probably was as much as she could venture before Christmas." As one contemporary critic gently wrote: "Of her figure it would be unjust at present to speak. She appears to be far advanced in the style in which ladies wish to be who love their lords." And Frances's lord had been out of England two and a half years!

In March 1815 Dorothy saw her boys leave her for ever, though mercifully she was not aware of that. From that time the records of the few remaining months that she spent in England are almost non-existing. She was acting in Bath the early part of January, and it was then that Charlton, the stage manager, suggested that she should take the part of the old maid in the play of that name, her answer being that she would not do so, she had done it once as a frolic for her benefit, but would not act such parts again.

After this the account of her engagements ceases, not because the public had grown tired of her, for she had many applicants for her services, but that before her sons went away she could think of little else and wanted to be in London, and afterwards she was too prostrated by grief to be able to work.

In May 1815 Bannister, the man with whom she had so often acted, announced his determination to

take his leave of the stage in a benefit performance on June 17, and he wrote to Dorothy asking her to act for the last time with him. Her answer, written on May 3, will explain why she had to refuse, and shows incidentally how many were her chances of work if only she could have seized them.

"May the 3rd.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your letter came at the time Sir Gilbert, my physician, was with me, or I would not have sent your servant away without an answer, for it was my intention to have written to you at all events this evening.

"*I am very ill*, and in the sincerity of my good wishes request you to give up all thought of me. My health is in so very precarious a state that I have not been two days together out of my own rooms since my return home: so situated, I have been obliged to refuse many applications, including one *very pressing one* from the Caledonian Society.

"I have been obliged to give up one of considerable advantage that was to have commenced at this very time, and I have, too, some reason to fear that I shall be under the necessity of forfeiting one still more so; that, too, was to have begun at the end of this month, and to have concluded in the middle of June. You perceive how unfortunately I am situated, for if I should be well enough to play on the 1st of June in London, I should be able to fulfil my engagements in the country, if not the consequence would be that I must disappoint you. Added to this my friend and medical adviser is very anxious that I should give up every hope of playing this summer, and as soon as I am able, to repair to the seaside, from which I felt some relief last year.

“Do me the justice to believe that, independent of my own sufferings, it is a real mortification to me to be deprived of the—what shall I say, pleasure or pain?—of witnessing the last exertions of one of the most genuine performers of the age. May every happiness attend you.

“Yours sincerely,

“DORA JORDAN.”

It was on May 19 that she wrote a short and significant note to Mrs. Lloyd. Putting the two letters together, what is to be thought of Barrington's inspired paragraph asserting that she earned £7000 this last year?

He was a most subservient receiver of favours, and never stinted that gratitude which he hoped would encourage other favours to follow. In his whitewashing of the Duke he had the effrontery to assert of Dorothy's income “that the very last year she remained in England brought her a clear profit of near £7000. I *cannot* be mistaken in this statement, for my authority could not err on that point. The malicious representations, therefore, of her having been left straitened in pecuniary circumstances were literally *fabulous*,” etc.

The following note is a pungent satire upon the biographer's extravagant assertion—

“DEAR MRS. LLOYD,

“I return you the one-pound note with many thanks; best regards to you all.

“Yours sincerely,

“DORA JORDAN.

“10 o'clock night, 19th May, 1815.”

How could Dorothy have earned £7000 a year?—an engagement for six or seven nights for which she received £150 would take two or three weeks to complete, for she only acted two or perhaps three evenings a week. At that rate, if she worked without cessation the whole year round she would only have gained £2500. Who was Barrington's unassailable authority? By whose influence did he further assert that Dorothy acted, when tired of the stage and all its ways, simply because she was infatuated with it, and how could he tell that the Duke had no concern directly or indirectly with the cruel and disastrous circumstances which caused the last catastrophe?

I fear Barrington, like some other gentlemen, did protest too much and show too plainly where he learnt his lesson, for Clarence was hard put to it to find apologists when all the circumstances of Dorothy's death were made public.

By this time her third son Frederick, said to be by far the best looking of the five boys, had gone out into the world to prove his courage, and this sixteen-year-old boy was in one of the greatest battles that the world has ever witnessed. Dorothy had gone on that revivifying trip to the sea of which mention has been made earlier, and from the unnamed town she wrote to Miss Lloyd in answer to a letter telling her of the results of Waterloo. It should be noted that she wrote to ask a simple thing about the whereabouts of her son, and again wrote, not to the Duke who had the information, but to her old friend, who was evidently in constant touch with him and with her children.

(Postmark) June 24th, 1815.

“MY DEAR JANE,

“I return you many thanks for your very kind attention. I wish I had seen the paper, and my mind is for the present much relieved, but what I have suffered for these few days past is beyond description. I have not yet recovered [from] it, but ought [to be], and indeed [am], most thankful to God for his preservation of that dear object of my constant anxiety. I had a most charming letter from [him] only two days before the battle. He desires me to send him a small canteen that I have got for him, and [I] should be obliged, dear Jane, if you will find out how I can send it, and where I am now to direct to him. This is a delightful spot, but I have really suffered great anxiety in it, but I will trust in God’s mercy and hope for happier days. My blessing [on] the dear children and best regards to all your family.”

There was one more and a very significant letter which was written from Cadogan Place early in August, and which again shows that even in distress she was not allowed to apply personally to Clarence, though he only could have helped her. The letter does not give the year, but there can be no doubt as to when it was written, as John Pyne Coffin was on foreign service until July 1814, when he returned from Genoa, where he had been under the command of Lord William Bentinck, and was given the rank of Brevet-Colonel. During this year in England—he left again towards the end of 1815—he got into money difficulties and his appeal for help was passed on to Dorothy, which points to the probability that his debts had had something to do with the young Fitzclarences,

who, knowing their father's usual impecunious state and their mother's loving generosity, took the line of least resistance and enlisted her sympathy. She paid the money and procured the freedom of the unmanly soldier from the sponging-house in which he languished, receiving a foul reward, as her letter shows.

*"To the Rev. Thomas Lloyd, Teddington,
Middlesex:*

" Cadogan Place, 7 o'clock, August 3.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I some time since wrote to you inclosing a letter from Col. Coffin, and requesting you to procure from the Duke of Clarence an answer bearing a fair testimony to my assertion that H.R.H. had nothing to do with the money transaction that took place between the Col. and me when he was detained in a sponging-house in London. I am now the more anxious for the Duke's answer, having received a very insolent and ungrateful letter from the Col., insinuating that I had received the money from the Duke and took advantage of Col. Coffin in applying to him for a second payment—this is an injustice that I will not sit down quietly under.

" I have been very ill indeed, and am at this moment so weak that I can scarcely guide my pen; before I go from town I hope I shall be able to see Jane, to whom, and Mrs. Lloyd, I beg to be kindly remembered, and now believe me, my dear friend, yours sincerely,

" D. JORDAN."

It was August 3 that Dorothy wrote the letter to Mr. Lloyd about Col. Coffin, and when she left town it was to go to Margate to appear for the last time on any stage.

A statement was made from memory many years later by Edward March saying that she left England in August, but John Barton asserts that he went to see her in September of that year, and as he could fortify himself with documents this was more likely to be correct.

She must have returned home sometime before the end of August, returned to endure that further disastrous blow which was to exile her from England.

There has been much mystery made of this, because no one dared at the time to tell the truth about it; March, Barton and the Duke being the chief people implicated. The first from weakness, the second from misplaced astuteness, and the third from callousness. Each one of these three could have cleared the matter up, and each one was too much to blame ever to do more than deal vaguely with the fringe of the trouble and endeavour to persuade those who wanted to know that the only real fault lay in Dorothy's hysterical misconception.

As a matter of fact Dorothy came home to find Edward March in despair, asserting that difficulties had so crowded upon him that he was ruined. Dorothy had heard this story from others, from Alsop, from George and Henry, from Clarence and from Frances Alsop, and had suffered so cruelly at each calamity, that she was past bearing it over again with anything like philosophic calm.

She was overwhelmed, and when she asked March how far she was implicated, she was seized with a terror which was great enough almost to upset her reason. For this man to whom she had always given trust and affection had repaid her magnanimity by filling in the notes she had sent him with sums quite

different from those he had named to her! He appears reluctantly to have brought out one note of hand after another, each signed by her name and promising payment of a comparatively large sum, until she at last—she, the indomitable, the succourer of others—succumbed, herself ruined with the rest of them!

CHAPTER XX

DEATH THE RELEASER

"As a mother Mrs. Jordan will behold her children anxiously and attentively watching over her declining powers, blessing herself as she surveys their fondness and affection, that fortune and her prudence have rendered them thus cheerful, happy and independent. The noble sentiments flowing from a liberal education will teach them to reverence the mother, without sprinkling the tender nomination with any unworthy reflections on the *father*."—*Written in 1798. ANON.*

"We have never seen anything more interesting than the gentlemanly propriety of his regret."

IT is impossible to convey the tragic effect of this calamity upon Dorothy. March had failed her; the one man upon whom she thought she could rest her trust, and to whom she had given an affection springing from esteem. From her girlhood she had been surrounded by people who asked support from her; she had had to keep mother, brothers, sisters, children, and the man—usually called her protector—who begged the most gracious and public protection from the effects of his sins. In March she thought she had found a comprehending, sympathizing comrade; she now proved him as weak as the others and as dishonest; she had given him all she could, and now he stood confessed another parasite. His creditors were around him, demanding satisfaction and payment of the bills that Dorothy had given him.

Who would help her? to whom could she turn? Not General Hawker; he stood aloof in the Court circle, though his wife lived in Dorothy's house. There was but one person, and that was the Duke; yet she could not approach him directly, it must be through his agent

—the man whose interest lay in keeping his master free from all care on her account. So she wrote to him and he went to see her, finding her—I quote his words—“in tears and under much embarrassment, from a circumstance that had burst upon her, as she said, ‘like a thunderstorm.’ She found herself involved to a considerable amount by securities, which all at once appeared against her, in the form of bonds and promissory notes, given incautiously by herself to relieve, as she thought, from trifling difficulties, *a near relation, in whom she had placed the greatest confidence.* Acceptances had been given by her in blank, upon stamped paper, which she supposed were for small amounts, but which afterwards appear to have been laid before her capable of carrying larger sums.”

Dorothy put herself into Barton's hands, perhaps hoping that the “forbearance” which she had shown to the Duke four years earlier would now be extended to her. This, however, was not Barton's plan for his master; he was a man of business, and he regarded this simply as a matter of business. So he went through the statement of debts, finding them paltry enough, the total amount being under £2000. Yet for so long had Dorothy staggered under the accumulations pinned upon her by her “friend” and relatives, so horribly had she suffered recently, and so certain was she that she could no longer act, that this unexpected calamity was the last crushing defeat. Being told that the holders of the bonds were demanding satisfaction, she saw before her nothing but that terror from which she had rescued Coffin, a sponging-house.

Barton uttered no word to reassure her. She had accepted the princely Duke's method of repaying what he owed her, and the Duke demanded the full

pound of flesh from her. When Dorothy showed her terror of immediate arrest to this man, declaring that she wished to act honourably to all, and even to save March's wife and children from utter ruin, Barton listened and explained that she could not possibly treat with the creditors unless she kept her liberty. He deliberately turned her mind to France, and when she betrayed that she had thought of going there he caught at and fostered the idea. At once he set to work to make it easy for her; drew up a list of creditors and promised to settle with them all on her behalf, but on what conditions that glibly explanatory gentleman does not reveal. In any case he assured her that ten days would see things put right, and that after a little stay on the other side of the Channel she could return in comfort. Whether March was to join with him in putting matters straight he does not say; March's own explanation seems to throw the blame on Barton, whom, however, he does not mention by name. Each of these two conspirators, in fact if not in intention, blames the other for Dorothy's enforced and tragic banishment. Barton says that March—but he, too, avoids mention by name—refused to give her an assurance that she knew the worst and that no further debts were hidden from her; and March asserts that Barton never made the slightest attempt to pay off any fraction of those debts for £2000. Thus, these two people and Clarence, who knew all that was done—and let it be done—played into each other's hands, sent Dorothy abroad under false pretences, and kept her exiled there.

In his explanation, given in 1824, March says: "I can positively assert that never during her lifetime was one shilling paid towards *liquidating* the securities in

question; nor was it urgent that it should be done, because the creditors—for the most part personal friends—well knew the upright principles they had to depend upon.” This was a very different story from that which he had told her in 1815, when he was thoroughly frightened and knew that there was danger. It was not true either, for Dorothy herself said that the greater number of these creditors were “utter strangers” to her.

But Barton coldly and cruelly thought it as well to clear Dorothy out of his master’s path; for there is no doubt that her continued public presence kept memory alive concerning Clarence’s past, and not only did much to prevent his matrimonial schemes from coming to realization but kept him continually unpopular. In addition to this, Dorothy was during these years enduring much sorrow, which disturbed the Duke’s kind heart and made ineffectual tugs at his purse-strings, so it was best to get rid of her. Thus Barton made it easy for her to go to France, and made it impossible for her to return. He asserted years afterwards that to the day of her death Dorothy received £2000 a year from the Duke, leaving it to be inferred that she had that amount to spend. He knew, however, that the daughters’ allowances were deducted from that sum, being paid directly through the bank, and he knew that the greater part of the residue was mortgaged. In addition, he was not the man to arrange any payment without first handling the money, but he is careful not to say what arrangements about that he made with Dorothy. It is safe to assume that this would mean a further reduction from her income. When we consider these things, how much can have been left? Probably not even the £200 a year mentioned by

Townsend. At the interview at Cadogan Place it is probable that Dorothy insisted that the sums promised her daughters—or some sum, at all events—should be for the future regularly remitted, for in 1816 we find Frances, for whom Dorothy had intended with great difficulty to spend £90 a year, again drawing an income from Coutts's Bank.

There was the house to consider, the lease of which had not run out, while the furniture was hers. Both sons-in-law had refused to buy it, and March could not afford to live in it. So she sent to a man named Charles Wigley, who kept some exhibition rooms in Spring Gardens, to ask if he would purchase the furniture. He, needing the advice of an expert, took with him a Mr. Fisher, auctioneer and father of the actress Clara Fisher, to see what was in the house. Fisher said that if a purchaser wanted the things with the house, carpets fitted, etc., they were worth £300; but if they were to be removed he would say a hundred less, though he might go as far as £220. The *friendly* Wigley here saw the chance of a bargain; he discussed the matter privately with Dorothy, assuring her that she could not get more than a hundred guineas for her things, and that he was ready to give that amount. In her worry and ignorance of business she agreed, and he got the *remainder of the lease of the premises thrown in!* Fisher, on hearing of the matter later, assured the writer of *The Great Illegitimates* that the whole was well worth five hundred pounds.

This was Dorothy's last act before hastily leaving the country. Her terror of prison had been shown thirty-three years earlier when the villain Daly had threatened her with it and caused her to fly in poverty from Dublin, and now her mind was so racked with

anxiety and sorrow that when a man of Barton's knowledge and position urged her to save herself from that dreaded penalty, how could she do aught but take his advice, believing it to be most honourably well meant?

Barrington, writing a dozen years later, and repeating the lesson he had been taught, would have us believe that the Duke was solicitous for Dorothy's comfort, and insisted upon her taking Miss Sketchley with her, and being escorted by Colonel Hawker, a brother of the general. This may have been true, but Miss Sketchley had been Dorothy's companion for years, and was in no way responsible to the Duke, who, if he did thus far interest himself, shows that he had taken an active part in the affair, and let her go unnecessarily, rather than relieve her trouble.

Dorothy went to Boulogne, and took a small cottage at Marquetra, in a quiet lane opening to the sweet Vallée du Denacre, where the trees were green and shady, and whence, after three minutes' walk through the cornfields, she might look over the tumbling waves of the Channel. About twenty-five years later Douglas Jerrold lived for a time in "Mrs. Jordan's old house," and in the little room where her listless fingers had so sadly pulled the strings of her guitar, and where she waited with slowly dying hope for Barton's letter which never came, the dramatist wrote his play, *The Prisoner of War*. By that time the two little cottages had perhaps been converted into one and the garden terraced, for when Barrington saw it shortly after Dorothy's death he pronounced it very small and semi-detached. Madame Ducamp, her landlady, a gardener's widow, dwelt in the adjoining cottage. She, being old, had a girl who worked for her. This girl, named Agnes, fell in love with Dorothy and was ready to do anything for

her, telling Barrington that she waited upon that charming lady as if she had been a princess; also how "that dear unfortunate English lady" passed her time in nervous expectation of letters from England, and that on the days when the post came in she was utterly miserable; that her one consolation was music, and Agnes added that sometimes she sang *Madame* to sleep. Dorothy's poverty made a great impression upon the young cottage girl, "the economy of that charming lady was very strict"; once she had been rich and magnificent, but then she was very poor indeed, and, though so very poor, she "paid her rent like a goddess."

The futile Barrington, hearing all this, glibly asserts that this only meant that she had become careless of money and affected poverty for a whim. He published his memories of Dorothy between 1826 and 1830, after a public furore had been created concerning Dorothy's last days, and his aim was to clear the Duke of the well-deserved stigma which his unimaginative and stupid business man, Barton, had caused publicly to be fixed upon his character. Barrington would have believed all he was told by the Prince's man, but if the Prince was his informant he believed on his knees, devoutly and abjectly.

Poor Dorothy, waiting, waiting in that little cottage for the letter from Barton telling her that it was safe for her to return, while he was happily conscious that she was safely away! The days passed: ten, twenty, thirty days, ten weeks, nearly ten months—and Barton made no stroke of the pen to release her. And the Duke permitted this refinement of cruelty, yet he was solicitous for her comfort! He knew that her life was bound up in her children; that never to see them would

be a prolonged anguish; he knew all her circumstances, but he raised no finger to bring her back into the warmth of love and friendship. For £2000 he sold her to sorrow—nay, for less; had he but caused Barton to write and reassure her she would have come back. Is it to be wondered at that when things were known people who had admired the great actress were hot with indignation against him; that even men like Creevey could speak of him in 1820 as “that Prince of Blackguards, brother William;” that her very creditors cried shame upon him? That nothing that Barton could write or say afterwards could wipe the Duke clean of this stain.

From Marqueta Dorothy wrote a tender letter of forgiveness to March, promising that when she returned to England Dora and her children might always rely upon her to find a home. But March, without being a bad man, was cursed with littleness of mind, and, from sheer petty annoyance, helped to grind her into the dust.

While Dorothy was at Marqueta, her boy Frederick and her girl Sophia were in Paris, and she received the following boyish, generous letter from Frederick, who had just learned of the Marchs' calamity. It was probably their presence in the French capital which caused her to leave Marqueta for Versailles. From the time of going abroad Dorothy borrowed her Welsh sister-in-law's name and called herself James, and her son's letter is directed “To Mrs. James, Post Office, Boulogne, France.”

“MY DEAR MOTHER,

“My dear Sophia has been very low-spirited since she received my ever-dear Dora's letter, and she

took the earliest opportunity to speak to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who would speak to her husband about it. I am afraid we shall not come home for this long time. I long to see dear Lucy. The Arbuthnots are very kind to me. I have got a room in Paris. Hale is better behaved. I have had a horse shot. Tell all about the [March]s. If you want money for them, don't ask me for it, but take *my* allowance for them; because, with a little care, I could live on my father's till *their* business is a little settled. Now do as I ask you—mind you do, for they have always been *so kind* to us ALL, and if I can make any return I should be a devil if I did not; so take my next quarter, and, as you may want to give them some, do that for *my sake*. I am very well. God bless you.

“FRED. FITZCLARENCE.

“P.S.—Sophia will write to you on Thursday.

“Paris.”

How long she stayed at Versailles is not known, perhaps until the end of the year; then she went on to St. Cloud, where she certainly had the companionship of Miss Sketchley. At St. Cloud she engaged rooms in the Maison du Sieur Mongis, a house in the square which was “large, gloomy, cold and inconvenient”; probably a typical French place, which even to-day seems bare and chill to the English visitor. The garden was overgrown with weeds and shadowed by two mournful cypresses. As for her rooms, they were shabby and comfortless—“a small old sofa being the best-looking piece of furniture.” Here again she waited, and waited vainly, for that letter which was to call her home.

That she did receive letters is undoubted, but the one upon which her life was staked never came—that one which would tell her that it was safe to return and to see again the children, the loss of whom was breaking her heart. One dunning letter she answered on February 22, 1816, being careful, it may be noted, to put no address but Paris on it.¹ It is addressed to W. Vickery, a hairdresser of Tavistock Street, Covent Garden.

“SIR,

“The date of this will, I hope, explain what might appear neglect. I am very sorry that my bill should have so long remained unpaid; it was not my intention to have remained here so long, but a most painful and distressing illness for these three months past has left me in a very weak state, and I fear I shall not be able to undertake so long a journey till the spring, at which time you may rest assured of receiving the amount. I am very grateful for your friendly forbearance, and indeed will always consider myself obliged to you for your gentlemanly conduct towards me on every occasion.

“I remain, sir, your obliged frd.,

“DORA JORDAN.”

At St. Cloud, as at Marqueta, Dorothy again lived for the post, and also lived with extreme economy; indeed, the proprietor of the house thought her so badly off that on one occasion he offered her a loan, while wondering at the beautiful diamond ring she wore. Waiting hopelessly for that which never came,

¹ The original of this is one of the many in the collection of Mr. A. M. Broadley.

her brooding mind started a new alarm. Perhaps March had not disclosed all her liabilities, and the reason she was kept so long abroad was that there were other large sums which had been hidden from her and which could not be met. So she wrote to March, imploring him to set her mind at rest on this point. His only answer seems to have been in the nature of, "I have told you once; there is nothing more to say." She could not be sure he spoke the truth, and she asked him to assure her on oath that there were no more. This he refused, and his refusal made her think that all she feared was true.

Years later, when, as has been said, Barton had to make his public defence of his master, he threw the whole blame of her continuance abroad upon March, saying that all she "required in order to set her mind at ease on the extent of the demands that might be out against her was that the person who had plunged her into all these difficulties should declare on oath that the list he had given to her included the whole. This the party from time to time refused to do."

In January 1816 Dorothy sent Miss Sketchley to England to receive her quarterly income—or the remnant of it—and to get from Edward March the required assurance. Miss Sketchley had seen her employer's sufferings, either all or part of the time she was in France, and was naturally indignant that such anguish should be allowed to continue, and perhaps she showed her indignation too keenly, for March and his wife—self-absorbed—resented it. They allowed their jealousy of her to weigh against the happiness of their mother, and March absolutely refused to comply. Certain, then, that Dorothy's suspicions were true, Miss Sketchley told them that Mrs. Jordan intended

to keep her address secret, and that their letters must be sent through the post office at Paris. March pretended in his explanations that he then heard for the first time that she was going to call herself Mrs. James, yet he must have known that she had done so from the time she went to Marquetra, as Frederick's letter proves. He also pretended that this was the first he had heard of any idea that Dorothy doubted his statement, but Barton's words quoted above, and this letter, written by Dorothy on the return of Miss Sketchley to St. Cloud, to Barton, do not confirm this. The date is January 16, 1816.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have forborne writing to you that I might occupy as little of your time as possible. My spirits are in so disturbed a state that my weak hand is scarcely able to trace the still more feeble effort of my mind. . . . He [March] assures you that I am in possession of the names of my creditors, to whom he has made me answerable by filling up those blank acceptances that I so unguardedly gave him, and *yet declines* making an oath to that *purpose*; this has caused me much uneasiness, for it appears to me vague, if not *equivocal*.

"I can solemnly declare that the names I sent to you are the only ones I know of, and the greater part utter strangers to me.

"I was in hopes that, not only out of humanity and justice to me but for his own sake, he would have done it voluntarily, as it would have been the means of removing in a great degree the unpleasant impressions such a determination might cause in the minds of those who still remain anxious for his future well doing. I do not command or enforce it, but *entreat* it as the only

relief he can give to a being he has almost destroyed. . . . What interpretation can be put on his refusal? If he says he will not take the oath it is *cruel*; and if he adds that he cannot, what is to become of me? Is it in nature possible for me to return to an uncertain home, with all the horrors I have suffered there fresh in my mind, with the constant dread of what may be hanging over me? I really think, under those circumstances, that when my presence would be absolutely necessary, that it would not remain *in my own power* to be able to encounter such misery. It is not, believe me, the feelings of pride, avarice, or the absence of *those comforts* I have all my life been accustomed to, that is killing me by inches; it is the loss of my only remaining comfort—*the hope I used to live on of from time to time seeing my children*. The above assertion I can convince the world of, if driven to it, by leaving the bond (all I have) to the creditors, and the Duke's generous allowance to the decision of the law.

“It is now, and ever has been, my wish to save Edward March, for even now I feel a regard for him I cannot conquer; but surely I may expect some return of gratitude from a man who, by a single act, could relieve those fears that are nearly *insupportable*. The idea is shocking.

“Excuse this long letter; but I am sure you will see and feel the motives of the urgency. Once more, dear sir, forgive and excuse,

“Yours,

“DORA JORDAN.”

Barton uses this letter as a means to fasten the cause of her lingering agony for another six months upon March. But what did Barton do to help her? He did

absolutely nothing! He seems not even to have written to March on this painful matter; for March declared that he knew nothing of this letter until eight years later when he saw its accusing words in the columns of the daily papers. He was childishly, weakly cruel to a woman to whom he owed much; Barton was intentionally cruel with the method of a man who regarded the woman as of no more importance than a piece of broken furniture, a thing to be thrown away and forgotten.

In his defence March states that he did repent and wrote to Dorothy, but that as her letters were directed to Mrs. James, and as her place of residence was kept a secret, she never received the letter. It seems easier to believe that that letter was never written, as March certainly lied concerning his knowledge of the assumed name.

So, by the callousness of those to whom she had given her life, Dorothy was left alone with Miss Sketchley until she died, with no word from the Duke to cheer her solitude, no sight of her younger children to warm her heart, no comforting visit from those daughters who had always been glad partly to live upon her exertions.

It was during the spring days of 1816 that Helen Maria Williams, translator of *Humboldt's Travels* and writer of many books, learned what a distinguished neighbour she had, and went four times to see Dorothy in her rooms at St. Cloud, holding a long conversation with her on each occasion. So impressed was she with the privilege that she wrote an account of each meeting immediately after, and later, upon Miss Williams' death, these accounts were lent to the writer of *The Great Illegitimates* for reproduction.

In these conversations we find anything but a diseased or even a relaxed mind. They are full of memories of the stage and of people tending to verify and amplify facts mentioned in other books; they show clear criticisms upon current and past events, and a great interest in French theatricals and dramatists, and sometimes Dorothy alluded to her own past, and gave much information about her brother George's widow, Maria Bland. She also presented Miss Williams with a copy of some verses which she had written, under the name of Anthony Acerbus, upon *All the Talents Greedy Rout*. At the fourth meeting arrangements were made for another, but the day before it should have taken place Miss Williams received the following letter—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ I am not unmindful of the appointment made for to-morrow, but circumstances have intervened which will preclude me the pleasure of a meeting; in addition to which, my spirits are so depressed that I should prove but a melancholy companion for one so full of energy as yourself. With every sentiment that can be dictated by warmth of friendly attachment, believe me, I remain, dear madam,

“ Yours very truly,

“ D. J.”

A fortnight later Miss Williams went to St. Cloud, and was told at the hotel that the health and spirits of Mrs. Jordan threatened the worst results, and that orders were given for the admission of only two people. So she returned to Paris, feeling that she would never see her more. A little later she heard that Mrs. Jordan was dead and buried.

Thus it may be seen that Dorothy's death was not sudden, that those around her knew her to be seriously ill, and yet no child, Fitzclarence or other, went to see her or soften the last moments.

About the circumstances surrounding her death there are many stories, which cannot all be credited, though which are true and which false it is hard to decide. Sir Jonah Barrington's account is the one generally followed, and as he paid a special visit to St. Cloud to gather information there at first hand it must be reliable. The irritating thing is that he names the master of the house where Dorothy lodged simply "Mr. C——." But as the master of the house was Jean Jacques Mongis there is at once some doubt thrown upon the agreement between the tragedy as he heard of it and as it really happened.

An unknown gentleman who was in Paris at the time gave another account, and a London confectioner, who had removed to Paris and by chance found that she was at St. Cloud, adds another and sensational story to that of the last few weeks of her life. This person's narrative is discounted, however, by the fact that, being in difficulties some years later, he, returning to England, demanded of the Duke of Clarence the repayment of twenty pounds which he said he had advanced to Mrs. Jordan at St. Cloud, which payment—though he produced letters supplicating the loan in question—was refused, as he could not produce a receipt.

This man's story of the end was that on going to see her he was put off with evasive answers, and retired; that shortly after he received a letter from Dorothy, begging him to come at night and stand beneath a certain window of her rooms; that from this window she talked with him for two hours, telling him that she

stood in want of the necessities of life, that she was in a state of complete captivity and surrounded by spies. She took the loan of eighteen or twenty francs which he offered her, making him promise to return the following day, and naming a place where they might meet without interruption. The second night he went he gave her twenty pounds, promising to help her to escape to England in ten days' time. Keeping the appointment, he learned that she had died the preceding day. To this story he added that when he applied for the repayment of the loan he saw two or three individuals enjoying posts in a great establishment, whom he recognized as having held the situation of spies or keepers over Mrs. Jordan.

I am inclined to regard the whole of this story as a blackmailing fiction, though it is true that Miss Williams was put off by Dorothy "owing to circumstances which had intervened," and was refused admission a fortnight later. However, no suspicion was raised in her mind, and Barrington heard nothing of the sort.

The story of her death, as told by him, and of her burial, related by an English resident in Paris, are in substance as follows—

While in the Hôtel Mongis Dorothy showed the most restless anxiety for intelligence from England; her hopes rose as every post was due, and when she did receive letters they raised many emotions in her mind. At last she became more anxious and miserable than usual, being physically ill, so that her skin was discoloured, and from morning to night she lay sighing upon the sofa. Then came an interval during which she received no letters, and her trouble seemed too great for mortal strength to bear.

One morning she looked very ill, and eagerly asked Mr. C—— before the hour of delivery to go to the post office. On his return she started up and held out her hand to receive the missives. He told her there was none. She remained a moment motionless, looked towards him with a vacant stare, held out her hand again as by an involuntary movement, instantly withdrew it and sank back upon the sofa from which she had risen. Mr. C—— ran downstairs to find Miss Sketchley, but she had gone out, so he returned to Dorothy's apartment. He then saw a change that alarmed him, for she gazed at him steadfastly, but neither spoke nor wept; her face flushed darkly, then grew livid, and she sighed as though her heart were breaking. The frightened man knew not what to do, but in a minute he heard her breath drawn hardly, even sobbingly. Thoroughly terrified, he leaned over her and discovered that she was dead.

This man was perhaps a subordinate in the house, who told Barrington what he saw—but not what transpired after. Miss Sketchley returned to find Mrs. Jordan dead—as she believed, and wrote to Mrs. Hawker—who was just recovering from a confinement at her daughter-in-law's house at Woodchester—that her mother had died after a few days' illness. Mrs. Hawker was very shocked, but felt unable to go on a long journey. However, Miss Sketchley found that her friend was not dead but in a prolonged faint, and three days later she wrote again to the effect that Mrs. Jordan was still alive but very very ill. Now Mrs. Hawker prepared to go to St. Cloud, but before her preparations were complete—dear, deliberate daughter!—a third letter arrived announcing that Mrs. Jordan was really dead.

A Sunday paper made an announcement, which was copied by *The Times* on Monday, July 1, 1816, regretting to state that the favourite representative of the Comic Muse died at St. Cloud; that she had been seized with an inflammation of the lungs, which in all probability would have proved fatal, but that the immediate cause of death was a ruptured blood vessel, caused by a violent fit of coughing. The next day *The Times* contradicted this, saying that the lady who was with Mrs. Jordan had despaired of her life, but that severe blisters had been applied, and hopes were entertained of her recovery.

The next absolute fact, and one which effectually disposes of Boaden's suggestion that Dorothy did not die at this time at all, is that her death was registered at the Mairie at St. Cloud. As early as nine o'clock on the morning of July 5, 1816, two gentlemen presented themselves before the Maire, declaring that Dorothée Bland, Veuve Jordan, had died at the Maison du Sieur Mongis at two o'clock in the morning of that day: these were Jean Jacques Mongis, aged fifty-three years, proprietor of the Maison du Sieur Mongis, and Louis Amable Sciard, Capitaine d'infanterie, Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal de la Legion d'Honour, aged twenty-six, both living in St. Cloud. They registered her as forty-eight years of age.

This document is still in existence, and can be seen through the proper authorities.

The accounts of her burial range from refusal of Christian ground in which to lay the body, to a procession of two hundred of the most respectable parishioners of St. Cloud, headed by the Mayor in official robes, and a French minister pronouncing an oration over the grave. Between these comes the sensible and

convincing report given by a gentleman who was still living in Paris in 1830, and who attended the funeral. He declares that none of the few who knew her while near Paris ever heard her make the slightest allusion to the cause of her mental anguish, or utter one syllable in the shape of a complaint or reproach that would in the remotest degree assign blame; that she would rather pine in silence than breathe her wrongs and sufferings to the world. To this he added that the acuteness of her malady was considerably alleviated by the unvarying assiduity and watchful care of Miss Sketchley, who had been her companion for a long series of years.

With this preliminary, he tells how a Mr. Greatorex, the owner of a hotel in the Rue Pelletier, Paris, went often to St. Cloud, and as he knew that the supposed Mrs. James was in reality the renowned Mrs. Jordan, he was in the habit of calling upon her, being received with the amiable manner and "unaffected condescension that were universally allowed to be peculiarly her own."

The last time he saw her he noticed that she seemed to be ill, but did not imagine her to be near death. Two days later he went again to inquire after her health, and was told, to his surprise, that she was dead, and that already arrangements were being made for her funeral.

The interval of two days only seems too small, for Dorothy must have been extremely ill for some days, if the newspapers and Barrington's account are to be believed. However, this account was not written at the time, or by Greatorex himself.

Horrified, and finding that, in addition to her sorrow at the loss of Dorothy, Miss Sketchley, "surrounded

by strangers and unassisted by any compatriot," had to carry out all the business details of a foreign burial, Greatorex hurried back to Paris to find a Protestant clergyman. The haste of the French over interment would undoubtedly have led to the commitment of the body to earth without the rites of Christian sepulture had it not been for this friend's prompt action; and it was probably this expressed opinion which, later, gave rise to the popular belief that Dorothy had been buried with as little ceremony as a dog in the corner of a garden.

The English Chaplain to the Embassy was unable to attend, so Greatorex found a Rev. Mr. Marron, officiating pastor at the French Protestant Church of the Oratoire, and also collected as many as eight other Englishmen (including a William Henshaw, statuary, of Mortimer Street, London, and some one named Keith), with all of whom he returned to St. Cloud. Then he approached the Maire and impressed upon him the fame of the dead woman, upon which that gentleman attended "in his official costume." Thus, "the ceremony attending Mrs. Jordan's interment, although plain, was in every respect decorous, the coffin being covered with light blue cloth, lined and embellished with white furniture. After the office had been performed, a cold collation, consisting of fruits and various wines, was prepared by order of Miss Sketchley for the pastor and gentlemen who had officiated."

So says one who was present, and who had no reason to praise or blame any one concerned, and this seems the most trustworthy account of the end of a woman who, in her life, spent herself upon those she loved, and in her death was left by those loved ones entirely alone.

Upon the greater number of her children no blame could fall. Two were in India, five were under fifteen, others may have been purposely kept in ignorance concerning the anxiety which enwrapped her when abroad. Yet she must have written often to them. But no excuse can be raised for the inaction of the Marchs, the Hawkers, the flighty Frances, and especially the Duke and his agent Barton. These knew everything—these people who, by their joint or separate actions, had conspired to play on her fears of arrest and to encourage her idea of going abroad, and then had one and all refused to do the things they had promised, which would have enabled her to return with happiness of mind. They had got all they could hope for from her, and when they had carelessly reduced her to such a position of debt that she could by no possibility add further to their incomes, they seemingly washed their hands of her.

Sophia Fitzclarence, entirely dominated by her father, had been more or less estranged from her mother, and cannot be absolved from blame; Mary, the next girl, was not eighteen, an age when she would not have been allowed—indeed would not have had sufficient knowledge to travel alone to see her mother, and would certainly not have been given any help in doing so.

General Hawker went over to St. Cloud, says Boaden, “and I believe arrived there about *three days* after the funeral.” If he really went, what did he do? Did he make himself known to the authorities? make an examination of the events? take possession of the effects? pay up all outstanding expenses? settle with Miss Sketchley? arrange for a stone to be put over Dorothy’s grave that future generations might know

where she lay and show the world that her family at least respected her memory if it neglected her when alive?

No; the gentleman of “punctilious honour and integrity,” as Barrington describes him, did none of these things. If he went it must have been secretly, simply to satisfy himself that Dorothy was dead, certainly not to interfere in any of her affairs or to help Miss Sketchley. Would he have done differently had he known that all the story of bitter neglect would dribble through bit by bit to the public for a period of ten years, and again and again raise anger against the Duke of Clarence, and lay him open, when he became King, to intermittent and bitter reproaches as to the way in which he had treated “the hapless Jordan”?

CHAPTER XXI

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

“Thalia, thou ! I guess thy cause of woe,
Thy comic mask lies there thy feet beneath ;
The rivers of thine eye their banks o’erflow,
The favourite child of smiles—thy Dora, lies in death.
Her smile was by a thousand smiles repaid ;
Her art was nature, govern’d by thy laws,
To acts of good, full oft she lent her aid ;
Her talents gained her thus, with hands, the heart’s applause.
Such virtues not in vain for mercy plead,
Though fate the roseate crown with cypress twine ;
Yes, gentle shade ! thy kind benignant deeds,
Before the throne of grace, in golden letters shine.”

JOHN O’KEEFE *on Dorothy Jordan.*

“Nay, then I’ll be gone, for fear of being bail, and paying her debts,
without being her husband.”—WYCHERLEY: *The Plain Dealer.*

IN her burial as in her death Dorothy Jordan was dependent upon strangers. The ground in which her body lay was chosen by Greatorex, and strangers, more important for kindliness of heart than for rank, paid for the stone which marks the spot. A gentleman, named Henry Woodgate, of Dedham, Essex, had with his wife seen Dorothy shortly before her death, and he ordered a dark granite slab, writing to Genest, the great theatrical authority, to send him an inscription for it. This inscription, both in Latin and in English, is as follows—

“Sacred to the memory of DOROTHY JORDAN, who,
for a series of years, in London as well as other cities
of Britain pre-eminently adorned the Stage. For
Comic Wit, sweetness of voice, and imitating the

manners and customs of laughing maidens, as well as the opposite sex, she ranked second to none in the display of that Art, wherein she was so pre-eminently skilled. Neither was any one more prompt in relieving the necessitous. She departed this life the 5th of July, 1816, aged fifty. Remember and weep for her!"

The prejudice was so great against a Protestant and an actress that Greatorex had to choose a corner in a low, unused part of the cemetery, so low and damp that the authorities intended to raise that portion six feet. Thus a mound six feet high was heaped over the grave and the stone laid upon it under the idea that it would eventually be level with the surrounding ground. But the alteration was never made, and the heavy granite sank, until its head remained about three feet above the level and the foot one. Iron railings have since been put around the spot.

Five years ago this part of the cemetery was reported as being depressing in the last degree; damp, mouldy and neglected, the ground grown over with brambles and bushes, and strewn with crosses, cracked headstones and broken railings. In 1903 Aubrey, fourth Earl of Munster, visited and restored the grave, as a tablet attached to the railings records; yet now dark lichen is again growing over the stone and filling in the letter spaces, while the friendly ivy has crept up the hard railings, twined about two marble tablets attached to them, and is fast throwing thick tendrils over the whole grave. The tablets announce that in 1847 her affectionate daughter Lucy Hawker visited the spot, and that in 1842 her daughter Mary Fox was there. It took the daughters long to remember her; they did not think of it until his Most Gracious

Majesty King William IV had been dead for years, and until, age creeping upon them, they better realized a mother's sorrows.

After the funeral and the general settling up of things Miss Sketchley disappears from the story; she, like a loyal friend, had hotly resented the treatment given to Dorothy by her children, and was in return distrusted and hated by them. Lucy Hawker later became much disturbed as to what had happened to her mother's jewels, which had naturally been taken abroad. Had General Hawker gone in a dignified way to help settle Dorothy's affairs, this he would have learned; but when the question arose it was too late. So Mrs. Hawker wrote to her aunt, Hester Bland, at Trelethyn, asking if she could throw any light on the matter, and as Miss Bland knew nothing of their whereabouts, Lucy concluded that Miss Sketchley had stolen them.¹

Well, Miss Sketchley may have been unable to resist the temptation, seeing how little was owing to Dorothy's daughters; Dorothy may have given them to her at the last, or the police may have sold them with the other things. These respectable people in England could not put themselves to trouble until swayed by personal loss.

On Mrs. Jordan's death the police put seals upon all her personal effects, and eventually sold them at public auction, "even her body linen was sold amid coarse remarks of low French women," said Mr. Woodgate, who was present. The money brought by the sale was probably sent over to England, for the King's solicitor collected Dorothy's effects, she being illegitimate and dying intestate; and letters of

¹ Information from private letters.

administration were taken out at Doctors' Commons, May 24, 1817, the total amount from all sources being sworn at under £300. For nearly seven years after that date nothing more was heard of this little sum, which naturally raised some heartburnings among her eldest daughters, who seem to have cherished a belief that their mother had, secretly, money in the funds. They thought that the Duke had taken possession of the £300, for he and his agent had been guilty of extreme sharp practice with them.

Their allowance had been paid regularly through Coutts's bank, and as Dorothy died on the 5th of July a further quarterly portion was due at the end of June. But before the 30th of June Barton had heard of Mrs. Jordan's supposed death, and he at once stopped all payments. Mrs. Hawker knew what had happened at St. Cloud, but Frances was then acting at Bath, and she and Mrs. March remained in ignorance. These daughters were in Cadogan Place in January when Miss Sketchley so much annoyed them, but by June the house had probably been turned over to the dishonest Wigley, for Mrs. March, whose affairs were still in a painful condition, had, with her children, migrated to the rooms rented by Frances. The latter then owed her landlord, Withers, £170, and had promised him something at the receipt of her allowance; so at the beginning of July Mrs. March went to the bank to draw the two allowances, and was informed that her mother was dead, and all further remittances were stopped. Which must have been a great shock to her, on both accounts.

When Frances returned from Bath, her first action was to go to Englefield Green and gather together various things that were stored there belonging to her

mother, to the value of £100, including some chimney ornaments, a pendule, an original oil portrait of Dorothy, a mirror once the property of David Garrick, and the little half-finished rug which had had its share in the quarrel with Clarence. It would be interesting to know which of the portraits Mrs. Alsop then secured and sold.

Her next step was to write to the Duke, and this having no effect she followed Mrs. Clarke's historic action and began to write her memoirs, which would have included a long correspondence between Clarence and her mother—but chiefly letters from Clarence—from the beginning of their connection, for she was in possession of “sufficient letters and MSS. to fill a moderate sack.” This volume Frances tried to get Withers to publish, saying that she feared no results, for if she were imprisoned for libel she would gain public pity. But he, not having the same incentive, prudently refused. During these negotiations she read part of her production to him, showing that “her mother's nightly salaries at Drury Lane were constantly paid in advance on the night of the performance, ere she made her appearance on the boards.”

Later biographers have always tried to save the royal honour by throwing scorn upon this and the many other statements to this effect, but not one of them has brought any evidence to disprove such statements, and Dorothy's later letters show that Clarence was always glad to receive contributions.

A less sensitive publisher, Colburn, arranged to bring out Mrs. Alsop's book, and advertised it in June 1817 as *Authentic Memoirs of Mrs. Jordan*, but successful steps were taken to prevent its issue.

When the rest of the family knew what evidence

was hidden among those papers and letters, and also realized that their mother had nothing to leave any of them, they made an ineffectual attempt to secure something from the wreck. Now for the first time did the knowledge of the various "loans" become public, and such paragraphs as this from *The Theatrical Inquisitor* appeared in different papers, following upon the granting of letters of administration—

"It has since been asserted that the narrowness of this sum excited inquiry as to the disposal of her known accumulations; in consequence of which a memorandum has been traced in the writing of Mrs. Jordan which refers to various sums, amounting in the whole to £30,000, lent to a distinguished friend in trust for the children of a period previous to their connection. To this friend an application, it is said, has been made by the heirs for payment, with an assurance that the adjustment of their claims would not unwillingly be referred to the Court of Chancery."

This threat levelled against the Duke had no result; it was idle, of course, if Dorothy had given a receipt in full; so Frances continued to harry him while struggling against her ineffectiveness on the stage. Sympathy and her mother's memory gained her good engagements, but she never was anything but a copy of Mrs. Jordan, "a copy in water-colours." Her very tones were borrowed, and there is doubt that she possessed any real comic talent of her own. She quarrelled with her managers, and at times suffered great poverty.

Then the usual course with an undesirable was followed. The Duke's agent paid a small premium on her debts of £3000, and gave her a chance of going to America in comfort. She took the chance, and

landed in New York in September 1820, where she was announced on theatrical bills as "The Grand-daughter of the Late King of Great Britain." Six months later she died of an overdose of laudanum, whether unintentional or in a determination of taking her own life no one could tell.

The year before this happened public interest over Mrs. Jordan was raised again to a white heat of scorn for the Duke, because at the end of June 1819 a statement appeared in *The Messenger*, an English paper published by Galignani in Paris. This was followed on July 4 by another, part of which ran—

"We some days since inserted a letter on the subject of an unliquidated debt of sixty francs, due to the municipality of St. Cloud, for the space of ground appropriated as the last resting-place of the late Mrs. Jordan. We feel called upon to state, that immediately after the publication of the above-mentioned letter, we received repeated applications, both personal and in writing, from various British residents, all expressing an anxious desire to be permitted to take the debt upon themselves, both from a national feeling of what was due to the character of our country, and an individual sentiment of respect for the amiable deceased; and although, as we have authority to mention, the sum in question has been paid by a particularly active competitor in the honourable race of generosity, we nevertheless continue each day to receive letters of the same import from the departments."

Between 1816 and this date the Duke of Clarence, his agent and friends, had been disseminating the idea that Dorothy was in possession of wealth to the day of her death, and whenever opportunity arose, as when

Barrington wrote, the same course was pursued; but no protestations can contradict such plain facts as those of the administration of her money and this article from Paris.

The little sum which was all that remained of the fortune Dorothy had earned was the property of the Crown because of her birth; but the existence of debts caused it to be handed over to lawyers for use on a more auspicious occasion; and as in 1816 the debts of the Duke of Clarence, which he was trying hard to make the country pay, were a source of much gossip, Barton may have thought it wiser not to bring Dorothy's name again before the public. So it was not until more than seven years had passed, in December 1823, that anything was done, and then this announcement appeared in the papers—

“DOROTHEA JORDAN, DECEASED.—The creditors of Dorothea Jordan, late of Englefield-green and Cadogan-place, Sloane-street, in the county of Middlesex, spinster, deceased, who have proved their debts may receive a dividend of five shillings in the pound, by applying at the office of the Solicitor to the Treasury, No. 5, Stone-buildings, Lincoln's-inn. And those creditors who have not yet proved their debts, are requested forthwith to furnish the Solicitor of the Treasury with proofs thereof.”

This was an incredibly stupid thing to have done even at that distance of time; far better would it have been to have paid the trifles which was still owing than to stir up all the old scandal. However, the Duke had not been endowed with brains, and to his man had been denied the gift of imagination, so they deliberately walked into a mud heap of their own making.

It is as well to examine the sum which remained to be paid. The amount in hand was less than £300, and out of it five shillings in the pound was offered, which means that the proved debts were then less than the value of £1200! And for £900 the royal Duke put Dorothy again into the position of a martyr with the public, and caused his own name to become the target once more of violent popular scorn and contumely.

So by his own deed the Duke's reputation was torn to rags in the press, and there was no one to speak one word for him, save Barton, who at last responded with an anonymous defence which did nothing beyond adding fuel to the fire. Here is a specimen of the letters, this being addressed to *The News*—

“SIR,

“I observed a few days ago (with what sentiments of great indignation) an advertisement in the daily papers, announcing a dividend of five shillings in the pound as now in course of payment to the bona fide creditors of the late Mrs. Dorothea Jordan, formerly of Cadogan Terrace (*sic*) and lastly of St. Cloud in France.

“To those, Sir, who have witnessed, as I have often done, the honourable and liberal feelings of the lamented lady in pecuniary matters, the generosity and self-denial with which she permitted her theatrical salary to be taken weekly and devoted to expenses of a domestic nature, which expenses in any similar case would have been defrayed from other funds, it must be a source of pain to see her name held up to the world as that of an insolvent who had lived beyond her income, and defrauded the honest tradesman of his due. I am persuaded that there are enough of her

admirers still living, who, by a public subscription would have rescued her memory from this degrading but undeserved reproach. Though poor, my mite should cheerfully have been contributed to such a purpose, and hundreds would, I am assured, have been eager to do the same. If strangers to her domestic hospitality, and persons who never partook of her bounty, so feel, what—may I be allowed to ask—must have been the sensations of her high-bred children when they see their noble-minded parent thus held forth to public animadversion!

“To have been spared their feelings, had I, Mr. Editor, possessed no other resources, the privations of nature should have furnished the means to have rescued a beloved mother’s name from such foul and lamented obloquy.

“I am, Sir,

“AN ADMIRER OF FILIAL PIETY.”

Paragraphs from this letter were reproduced over the country and thus widely circulated, then on January 4, 1824, the anonymous defence appeared; but as it contains the same sentiments, information and phrases as the longer statement which was later forced from Barton’s pen over his signature, there can be little doubt as to who was the author of this. It is but justice to reproduce this defence.

“A paragraph is now in progress through the newspapers, stating that the debts of this lamented and interesting lady have been *compounded* for five *shillings* in the pound, which is now in course of payment. This statement is not correct: Mrs. Jordan died intestate in France; the consequence of which is, her

property vests in the Crown, and it has become the duty of the King's solicitor to collect her effects and apply them in the first instance to the payment of her debts. He has done this, and announced a payment to the extent stated. This is the fact, but it is not a *composition* of the lady's debts; the same course would be adopted in the case of any other British subject dying abroad intestate. But perhaps it would not have been necessary to notice the misrepresentation, were it not for the use to which it is applied by some of the public prints, in which it is made the ground of a bitter invective against a royal personage, formerly connected with that interesting female, by many dear and intimate ties. Nothing can be more unfounded than the charge, in which it is stated that she was left totally unprovided—to pine and die in want in a foreign land. Mrs. Jordan enjoyed an income of £2000 a year, settled upon her by the royal Duke. It was paid quarterly at Coutts's bank in the Strand; and the last quarter, which did not become due until after her death, was received by a lady, formerly a governess at Bushy, and afterwards resident with her as a companion in France, who came over to London for the purpose. But the report of the total abandonment and destitution of Mrs. Jordan is not new; it has been so long and frequently reported, and suffered to pass without contradiction, it is now received as truth in every circle; that it has not been noticed by some of the friends of the royal person aspersed, may excite surprise. We feel it our duty, however, to expose the misrepresentation, without regard to wishes of the friends of his Royal Highness. The exposure is due to the cause of truth, it is due to the country which has an interest in the character of

the illustrious individual so near to the throne, which could not belong to the case of a subject, however important, of inferior rank."

An interesting point in this matter is that when Dorothy was induced to flee from England the debts were said to be £2000, but after her death nine months later they were only under £1200. How had the sum of £800 been cleared off? Was that why Dorothy was so desperately poor when in France, or had March subsequently developed grit in his character, and paid off some himself? Barton also says that £500 was collected by Miss Sketchley after Mrs. Jordan's death, but March asserts that the last payment to her was made in the preceding April. Who was telling the truth? or was that £500 used to clear some part of the debt? Barton of course was not likely to divulge the enormous claims that there were upon Dorothy's allowance, her daughters, the Alsop debts and her own private ones.

As Barton's longer and acknowledged statement has been practically reproduced in various parts of this book, only some few assertions need be added. By slightly altering the statement above reproduced he begins his explanation, then proceeds to acquaint the public "in the first place that it was through my hands that the whole transaction upon the separation of the Duke and Mrs. Jordan passed; that it *was at my suggestion Mrs. Jordan adopted the resolution of leaving this country for France*, to enable her the more readily and honourably to extricate herself from troubles into which she had fallen through a misplaced confidence."

The italics are not Mr. Barton's, but that sentence shows that he was responsible for that unnecessary

and sad exile; he must have been aware at the time that there was no need for it, even though she felt herself past taking theatrical engagements.

He then adds that up to "the day of their separation Mrs. Jordan had received a large annual allowance from his Royal Highness." And so again he stands convicted, for Dorothy's own letters prove that so far from the bond being honoured she had been spoon-feeding the Duke for years from her earnings.

It was probably through Barton that Edward March wrote an "Authentic Statement," already quoted, to vindicate himself and incidentally the Duke from blame in the business; he speaks of himself under the title of "a near relative," details somewhat vaguely the story of the sudden discovery of her liability, says that no penny towards the liquidation of the debts was paid during her life, that she knew that no impediment to the arrangement of these debts existed, and consequently, when she found that month after month elapsed without anything being finally settled, her mind became troubled. He then detailed the disagreement with Miss Sketchley and the refusal through irritation to grant Mrs. Jordan's request to be assured on oath that no further claims existed; stated that he knew nothing of the letter Dorothy had written to Barton, and that it was only in January 1816 that "the lady alluded to (Miss Sketchley) informed two of Mrs. Jordan's daughters, that Mrs. Jordan's future place of residence in France was to be kept a profound secret from them, and that all letters from them to their mother must be sent through a third person and directed to Mrs. James, instead of Mrs. Jordan."

As has been said, Dorothy called herself James, and had her letters sent to a post-office from her first arrival

in France, and he must have known it. Indeed, the whole authentic statement is so garbled, so contradictory in almost every particular that nothing is to be made of it. His last assertion is that "there can be no question that the mind of this great woman had been long and grievously oppressed. . . . Can there be a severer censure upon her memory than to think that pecuniary difficulties, even *weighty* (which hers were not), could for any length of time have depressed a mind such as hers in its perfect state?"

Well, she had surely had enough, if ever any woman had, to unhinge her mind, certainly to deprive it of courage and tranquillity; but those who saw her in France give no hint that she was mad, or even unbalanced.

The newspaper controversy was in effect closed by a letter signed "Humanus," addressed to John Barton, which, though exaggerated in respect to Dorothy's life and condition in France, shows with satiric force the attitude generally adopted by the public on the matter. I quote only a part of it.

"With your approbation she fled to France, and there lived in want and misery. Your amiable and illustrious master was not ignorant of her embarrassments; yet they were unheeded. How they affected her, the letter she wrote from St. Cloud is too melancholy an evidence.

"It is well known she sunk under the pressure of her situation; foreigners supplied her with rags to cover her squalid and emaciated frame, and the benevolence of foreigners was taxed to lay her ashes in the tomb. Why did not you, sir, communicate these circumstances to your master? Why did you not say that the annuity was a sealed book—that she was

wretched and forlorn in a foreign land? Had your amiable and illustrious master heard this tale of woe he must have flown to her relief, *repaid the large sums which he had drawn from her theatrical talents*, or at least taken some steps to withdraw the arrest upon the annuity. Surely you must have known that a slanderous world would have interpreted *your* apathy into the apathy of your patron, and that there was risk, however pure and spotless the House of Brunswick is, of a shadow passing across the lustre of one of its brightest ornaments. And busy tongues, too, might have said that the bond had a careful provision, which by *legal* or voluntary assignees were to annul its efficacy, and that the prospect of these had swayed the noble-hearted and munificent granter in amplifying its contents.

“Unjustifiable and malicious as these allusions were, the credulous public might have given them ear, and it was your duty to have prevented them. You are not entitled, in exculpation, to plead the profuse allowance of two hundred pounds sterling afterwards granted to Mrs. Jordan’s daughters. Is it any excuse to an ungrateful country that monuments are reared and pæans are sung to one whose lamp has expired from want of the oil of subsistence?

“The Athenians honoured their Socrates *after* compelling him to drink the hemlock juice.”

Dorothy was beyond love and beyond suffering, so this quarrel mattered nothing to her. The Duke’s love went as she lost her youthfulness and grace, and for several years he was trying to sever the connection. When at last the strain had reached breaking-point he did his best to be relieved from the promise he had given her in legal form as to the provision to be made

in such a case; but being pinned down by it he gave her exactly what the bond decreed. Later he demanded a total termination of all intercourse with him—even on the subject of their children, and left her in the hands of a lawyer, who was hired to exact the last farthing possible from all sources for his master, an arrangement which well suited him until this servant, unable to weigh causes and effects, to distinguish between an unknown woman and a public favourite, so bungled matters as to drag his employer's name publicly through the mud again and again.

Happily she herself knew nothing of this later disgrace; she was dead, the light-hearted, gay spirit, who loved laughter better than tears; the strong spirit, who bore in her youth the heavy burdens of others, and in later life expended herself upon her children and their father; the generous spirit, who gave royally and to whom so little was given; fortunately she was dead, while all these lesser people quarrelled and lied over her life and memory.

CHAPTER XXII

GATHERED ENDS

“ Judgment, which every little fault could spy ;
But Candour, that would pass a thousand by :
Judgment and Candour used together can
Unravel secrets in the life of man.”

ANON.

“ Admiral Tarry-Breeks, a Royal Duke,
The moral brother of a moral King,
Is anxious 'mongst the Lords to look
A sapient, nautical, and righteous thing.
“ But ere he points at Britain's Queen a shaft,
Or steps, the ship that chases her, a-board on,
He should remember memory looks abaft,
And reads his morals in the hapless Jordan.”
“ BEN BACKSTAY” : *The Black Dwarf.*

YET later arose the idea that Mrs. Jordan was not dead, Boaden started it in his “ life ” of her, so it took fifteen years to bring this fancy to birth. His story is that stopping one day to look in a bookseller's window in Piccadilly he saw a lady stop also, whom he became convinced was his old friend. However, she immediately dropped a long white veil over her face, so, concluding that she did not wish to be recognized, he “ yielded to her pleasure on this occasion.” The chief evidence he shows is that as Dorothy was near-sighted she used eye-glasses suspended from a gold chain round her neck, which she used in a very peculiar manner, a peculiarity which this unknown seems to have reproduced.

Mrs. Alsop, too, said that she had met her mother in the Strand after her death, and was so certain of it

that it "threw her into *fits* at the time; and to her own death she believed that she had not been deceived."

Because of the above gossip a further veil fell over Dorothy's fate, and later biographers cast doubt over the account of the last sad days; mystery is so much more romantic than plain fact. Why did not Boaden go the whole way, and say that he had seen her shade which had appeared to him to prove that she was really dead? But it may safely be assumed that the Mayor of St. Cloud could not have registered as dead, a woman who had simply left the neighbourhood, nor would the various and independent accounts of her illness and death have provided such conclusive evidence.

It would have been well if this book could have closed with the last chapter, but there are so many references to her in later years, and so many small points to clear up, that a few more pages are necessary.

There is, for instance, the attitude of William, Duke of Clarence, who may have been greatly relieved at the removal of this incubus upon his mind. On the other hand, he may have been more worthy of the love with which Dorothy Jordan lavished upon him than history tells. He certainly became very ill in July 1816, an illness which lasted so long that on August 22 his birthday was celebrated at Frogmore without his presence. It is somewhat damping to sentiment, however, to find that the illness was ascribed to severe stomachic trouble. Though he was not at his birthday party, one may wonder whether his thoughts harked back to that birthday party ten years earlier when Dorothy took the head of the Royal table, the Prince of Wales on her right; their children being brought in for the admiration of the guests.

It has been said that he eventually continued his

allowance to Mrs. March and Mrs. later Lady Hawker; he also continued to Hester Bland at Trelethyn the annuity of £50 a year, and when he became King he doubled this amount, and the kind little Queen Victoria continued this sum until Hester died at the ripe age of eighty-nine, in 1848. It may also have been through the same source that the nonogenarian, Miss Thimbleby lived free from want in Manfredonia.

When William, in his fatuity joined in trying to destroy Queen Caroline, some papers became almost terrible in their wrath, and Jordan, Jordan, was the cry: "What, is the age so lost to dignity that avowed guilt can sit in judgment on persecuted innocence? One would think the spectre of the unfortunate Jordan would push him from his stool (in the House of Lords). . . . The people have seen open and notorious adulterers audaciously sitting in judgment upon a brave and virtuous Queen; they have witnessed a man who has inundated his country with bastards, and deserted the deserving but helpless mother of his offspring, and finally left her to perish like a dog in the streets, and to be buried as a pauper at the public charge when she ceased to maintain him by her own exertions, going about and slandering his sovereign, etc." (*The Black Dwarf*.)

A caricature of this period actually did show Dorothy appearing to him from her coffin, to denounce him, though denunciation was the very last weapon she would have used.

When Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen took the Duke in hand he was coarse, neglectful, almost brutal, looking upon her as just a medium for providing an heir to the throne. She, however, at once began the tutoring which he needed, and before long he began to

modify his most obvious sins of manner and life, an improvement which was soon communicated to the public in the usual pictures and verses. In one of the former the Duke and Duchess sit side by side on a sofa beneath a picture of the River Jordan with many tributaries, and with admonitory finger raised, Adelaide sternly says, "Mind! I will not *have* it!" to her gaping lord.

It is probably due to Adelaide's fine sense of justice that at last Clarence came to realize Dorothy's worth, and would speak of her with tears in his eyes. Some time after becoming King he sent for Chantrey, the sculptor, and offered him the commission of making a marble monument to Dorothy, discussing at some length the proposed statue and the place in which it should stand. He then, says Miss Berry in her diary, "went into a thousand particulars of their private life, always ending that she had been an excellent mother to her children."

Chantrey accepted the commission and produced the most beautiful emblem of maternal love that his mind could conceive. The face and figure are those of Dorothy, and the ineffable tenderness which curves the lips as she gazes down upon her child, reveals her mother-soul, strong with love and protectiveness.

It was soon after his accession that he ordered this statue to be made, but in 1839 it was still in Chantrey's studio, and seemingly also after the sculptor's death, for the Earl of Munster, her child, had objected to the spot chosen for it. Thomas Moore mentions seeing it there, and a Mr. Cornish wrote of it in *Notes and Queries* in 1851 as having been there "some years since." It is curious, however, that the statue he saw does not tally with the known group. He says: "I

LONDON, OP

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DOROTHY JORDAN

FROM THE STATUE BY CHANTREY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE
EARL OF MUNSTER, BY WHOSE KIND PERMISSION IT IS REPRODUCED

was singularly impressed with the gracefulness and beauty of a female figure, with three children; one was at her breast, and in the curled head of another at her feet was the mother's hand enfolded. On the pedestal was this inscription: 'Sacred to the memory of Norah Bland.'

The statue which now holds an honoured place in the house of the present Earl of Munster, has but two children, a babe sleeping in the mother's lap, while she with her disengaged hand is softly drawing up some drapery to cover it, the curly-headed boy standing at his mother's knee and looking with childish wonder at his little sister. There also is no inscription other than the name of the sculptor. So what Mr. Cornish saw was perhaps a first suggestion for the statue, which had been retained in the studio.

This beautiful work of art was for a considerable time at Mapledurham in the possession of her son Augustus, who, though longing to be a sailor, was thrust into the Church, that he might be provided for at the expense of the souls he could hardly hope to save. If this statue had to go begging for a resting-place in earlier days, there can be few of Dorothy's descendants now who would not welcome such a treasure into their homes with pride, for time brings its revenge, strips history of feeling and allows judgment to have its value. To-day we would seek a portrait of Dorothy Jordan with keen interest, while one of William IV would not, for its subject, draw the connoisseur into the next room.

As for Dorothy's children we find stray evidences here and there that some of them remembered her with love and reverence. The poet Bunn gives a long entry in his diary of the date April 24, 1834, proving this.

“Captain Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, who was present on this occasion (a command performance at Drury Lane), called me out of the Green Room, and with a considerable degree of excitement, said, ‘Bunn, I have never been behind the scenes of this theatre since the last evening my dear mother performed here, and [here his Lordship took me by the arm, walked down the long passage on that side of the house, and kicked open the dressing-room door at the end of it] that is the room in which she used to dress. I came with her almost every night, long, long before I wore any of these gew-gaws [pointing to his uniform and its decorations]. Excuse my emotion [passing his hand over his eyes] I could not help, and to tell you the truth, I could not resist being here to-night, but I never mean to come again. I was happier then than, with all the enjoyments of life, I have ever been since.’

“The temporary astonishment of the performers thus suddenly broken in upon at their labours of the toilet were lost sight of in the admiration of those to whom this charming touch of nature was communicated.”

How far Bunn’s pride at being taken by the arm by one of William’s children coloured this narrative cannot be said, but the Drury Lane in which Dorothy acted was burnt down in 1809, and rebuilt on a new plan, and only once at a charitable performance in 1813 could she have been in the dressing-room which Frederick Fitzclarence so affectingly kicked open.

Of Adolphus, the fourth son, Bunn wrote, on April 28, 1838: “Favoured with a long chat by Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, who is one of the very best hearted gentlemen of England to be found in her

broad and free land, and full of all good qualities. His habitual respect for the good old King, his excellent father, and the fondness with which he clings to the minutest recollection of his gifted mother, would serve as a bright example to most of the aristocracy amongst whom he daily breathes."

In conclusion, a list with some particulars, of Dorothy's children may be interesting. It can only be as exact as evidence allows, for much knowledge is wanting.

Frances Daly, born 1782, married Thomas Alsop, 1808, died in America, 1821.

Hester Bettesworth, born (?). This daughter may be regarded as unproven, though she took the name of Bettesworth in 1806 because, as one journal said, "her father, having recently died, had left her considerable property." There are other indications of her existence however.

Dorothea Maria Ford, born (?1787), married Edward March, of the Ordnance Office, at the Tower of London, 1809, had several children, one Leopold, being educated for a time at Haverfordwest Grammar School, with young James, the adopted son of Nathaniel Bland.

Lucy Ford, born 1788 or 1789, married General Sir Samuel Hawker, being his second wife, 1810, had ten children, one, Olivia, being baptized in Trelethyn.

There were ten Fitzclarences, all of whom, with the exception of Henry, who died, and Elizabeth and Amelia, who already had higher rank, were given the position of the younger children of a Marquis in 1831. These were—

Sophia, born 1792 or 1797, married 1825, Mr.

Sydney, who was created a baronet, and then Lord de Lile and Dudley in 1835. Died at Kensington Palace 1837, had six children.

George Augustus, Earl of Munster, born January 23, 1794, married Mary, daughter of the Earl of Egremont. Died March 30, 1842, buried in Hampton Church.

Henry, born March 27, 1795, died, Captain in 27th Foot, India, 1817.

Mary, born November 18, 1798, married 1824, Charles Richard Fox, son of Lord and Lady Holland.

Frederick, born December 9, 1799, married Lady Augusta Boyle.

Elizabeth, born January 18, 1801, married December 1820, William George, Earl of Errol, son of Earl of Glasgow.

Adolphus, born February 18, 1802, made Admiral 1853.

Augusta, born November 20, 1803, married 1827, Hon. John Kennedy Erskine, widowed 1831, married again 1836, Lord Frederick Gordon, son of the Marquis of Huntly.

Augustus, born March 1, 1805, Rector of Mapledurham and Chaplain to William IV. Married Sarah, daughter of Lord Gordon.

Amelia, born, it is believed, March 20, 1807, married 1830, Lucius, 9th Earl Falkland. There was some confusion about the birth of Amelia, it being variously given as March 20, 1807, and November 5, 1803, the latter probably a misprint for 1806.

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